5-15-2013

Passion and compassion : teaching first graders reading comprehension through kindness and the works of Kevin Henkes

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An Independent Study

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Summer 2013

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Passion and Compassion: Teaching First Graders Reading Comprehension through Kindness and the Works of Kevin Henkes is a literature review in the field of reading comprehension combined with a research-based curriculum created based on the experts and personal experiences both in the classroom as a teacher and a student.

The literary analysis includes and exploration of the definitions associated of reading comprehension, the teacher's role, specific teaching methodology, assessment, and how the teaching of reading should fit in a larger goal of teaching kindness and prosocial behavior.

The Reading Curriculum is structured around teaching the specific strategies of Questioning, Retelling, and Connecting through an Author Study of the works of Kevin Henkes designed for a first grade classroom. Each unit is divided into the specific skills that are needed to support each strategy, exemplifying lessons that focus on the specific methodologies mentioned in the literature review. Lessons were designed with the attention to reach all students where they are and their strengths, their developmental needs, and in alignment with the Common Core Standards.

Overall, this work is dedicated to framing the teaching of reading and reading comprehension as a way of teaching students how to think *while* reading, that reading *is* thinking, and by doing so, become more thoughtful, literate, and compassionate members of our society.

Table of Contents

Literature Review:
"Reading is Thinking"
A Look at Reading Comprehension and Kindness

Introduction

"In first grade, you learn to read. Then, you read to learn the rest of your life." Those were the words I received from my first mentor-teacher as a student teacher as an under-graduate. I have always had a passion for children's literacy, and I believe I have been attracted to first grade teaching because of the impact teachers have on setting students up with a love and proficiency of reading. That motto stuck with me.

However, learning to read and reading to learn, at its essence, should not be separated. To teach reading *is* to teach learning, or more specifically, thinking: *reading is thinking* and by thinking one reaches comprehension. Teachers, specifically first grade or early reading teachers, should expand their definition of what it means to be learning to read to include reading to learn and push their students beyond decoders and literal thinkers. This must be explicitly taught.

In my experience, the process of learning to think is not taught with the same emphasis as decoding strategies. In comparing and reflecting upon my personal experiences, including that of my student-teaching in a public school in Wallingford, PA and teaching-assistant positions in various private schools in New York City, coupled with a comparison of the Teacher's College First Grade Curriculum, I found the instances of explicit, thoughtful comprehension strategies lacking. When they were present and presented well, the students benefited and moved beyond literal understandings of their "just-right" texts.

Learning to read and reading to learn, should not be considered as two separate steps, but they should be taught simultaneously from the beginning of early stages of literacy development. Beginning with my own experience as a stable foundation, I explored what the literature and experts said about reading comprehension strategies and how to help students develop perspectives that will help them to become passionate and capable readers. Since reading and learning do not occur in a vacuum, but rather in a larger context and community, teachers are in a unique position to help their students create a kinder, more respectful world. My own hidden curriculum is that of creating life-long, passionate readers and kind human beings. Therefore, I explored this idea of teaching reading comprehension through the lens of teaching kindness.

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In reviewing the literature, the research suggests that the three important factors that affect reading comprehension are (1) the ways that we define reading and comprehension; (2) the teachers: the environment they create and the goals that they have; and (3) the specific ways to teach these complex concepts. These components are explored in depth below in order to help future teachers capitalize on the research to help not only teach students to read, but really teach them how to think.

Definitions

To be able to teach reading and specifically reading comprehension, it is first important to look at what is considered the definition of *reading*. Tompkins (2010)

acknowledges it is a complex process. Collins emphasizes that teachers need to teach their students that reading is "more than decoding words in a book, that the big job for any reader is to understand and to follow the story" (Collins, 2004, p. 21). Collins refers to Lucy Calkins intentions to "hold students accountable for thinking about and understanding their books […and] to impress upon the children that reading is much more than simply getting the words right" (Collins, 2004, p. 154).

What, then, lies at the heart of reading, if it is more than simply cracking the code? Tompkins notes that, "capable readers view reading as a process of comprehending or creating meaning, whereas less capable readers focus on decoding" (Tompkins, 2010, p. 280). It seems this idea of *comprehension* separates simply decoding from understanding.

However, much like *reading*, the term *comprehension* has its own set of complexities. Reutzel & Cooter quote the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) in describing reading comprehension as "a complex process … often viewed as the essence of reading. Reading comprehension is … *intentional thinking* [emphasis added] during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader" (Reutzel & Cooter, 2009, p. 154). Experts agree that comprehension should be the main goal of reading instruction (Lapp, et. al, 2005; Morrow, 2009). But what, then, is it?

At its core, comprehension means "the ability to read and understand text" (Morrow, 2009, p. 191). In order to comprehend, the reader must actively participate, interact, and transact with a text (Morrow, 2009; Tompkins, 2010). According to Tompkins (2010), there are different levels of comprehension starting

with literal, then inferential, critical and finally evaluative. Harvey & Goudvis believe that "true comprehension goes beyond literal understanding" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 14). However, there is a consensus that comprehension is an *interactive* and therefore *active* process between reader and text.

According to Judith Irwin (1991), as noted by Tompkins (2010), the factors involved in reading comprehension are the reader and text. Reutzel & Cooter (2009) add two more important components, the activity and the situational context. As these theorists all agree that reading is understanding, they concur that it is an individual interpretation involving meaning making and understanding.

Therefore, Reading is Thinking. As ways to assess, both Collins (2004) and Barnhouse & Vinton (2012) ask their students specifically, *what are you thinking?* Barnhouse & Vinton explain that they "listen carefully for evidence of thinking and not just brilliant thoughts" (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, p 134). Harvey & Goudvis define *strategic reading* as "thinking about reading in ways that enhance learning and understanding" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 23). They further warn that, "when readers focus solely on decoding, meaning takes a back seat" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 23). Therefore, in order to construct meaning, reading is more than just decoding but thinking. Barnhouse & Vinton contend that reading is about fitting the pieces of understanding together:

> What we need to teach is that reading is an act of accumulation that meaning grows out of words that we begin to fit into patterns that we then connect and actively construct into ideas. […] When students can see the raw materials that go into constructing interpretations and can see the process by which those raw materials come together toward meaning, they are surely reading (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, pg. 130).

Yes, understanding stems first from decoding the words, but *reading* is more than that.

Reutzel & Cooter refer to Palinscar (2003) in advising that to teach comprehension, the reading comprehension strategies are "essential tools for constructing meaning with text" (Reutzel & Cooter, 2009, p. 193). According to Oliver & Zimmermann, these strategies must be taught explicitly, so that students "don't simply become expert decoders but also learn to create meaning naturally and subconsciously as they read, far earlier than in the past" (Oliver & Zimmermann, 2007, pg. 32): therefore, one must learn how to comprehend, understand, and think.

One key to demystifying the process is to teach metacognition. Both Marrow (2009) and Tompkins (2010) advocate for teaching about metacognition - awareness of thinking and active control. According to Atwell,

> By using metacognition – by thinking about their thinking as they read – kids read more actively and analytically. They go deeper and get more. They become more connected to other readers and to the writers they're reading. They can better identify their confusions, and they have means to attempt to untangle them: they learn how and when to pause, consider, connect, and reflect (Atwell, 1998, p.211).

Combining the teaching of comprehension strategies with explicit teaching and opportunities for metacognition, teachers can teach students to be active participants in the meaning making process. But, what are the specific strategies, and how is this done?

Comprehension Strategies

If teaching to read is more than teaching to decode, we must also teach how to comprehend. The experts in the literature believe that there are specific

strategies that help students engage and think deeply about texts, i.e. read to think. Oliver & Zimmermann, state that "the research is now clear that instruction that actively engages students in asking **questions**, **summarizing**, and **synthesizing** text and identifying important ideas improves comprehension" (Oliver & Zimmermann, 2007, p. 27). These strategies are an important starting place, but they can be further subdivided to get at the essence of what it is to comprehend.

In order to question, summarize and synthesize, Harvey and Goudvis (2007) would argue that a reader needs to **connect** with the text, relate and integrate it to her own **background knowledge and schema**, **visualize** the words, make **predictions**, and **infer** beyond the literal text. They believe that all of these strategies fall under the "umbrella term" of **monitoring**. According to Tompkins, "the most important comprehension strategies for struggling readers are **activating background knowledge**, **determining importance**, **summarizing questioning**, **visualizing**, and **monitoring**" (Tompkins, 2010,p. 267).

> On the other hand, Barnhouse & Vinton believe that some of the so-called comprehension strategies – especially visualizing, predicting, connecting, and questioning – seemed aimed more at helping students develop the habits of active and engaged readers rather than to specifically help them comprehend more than they might have if they had not applied the strategy. To push students further, beyond the surface levels that typical strategy instruction often yielded, we need to come up with other ways of thinking and talking about strategies that were more clearly tied to demonstrable ends that the students could assess for themselves (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, pg. 25).

To this end, I would argue that, given the research, active engagement is the start. A teacher should continually look to push the conversation and thinking, and keep in mind, as Reutzel & Cooter succinctly state: "It is important for teachers to understand and convey to students learning reading comprehension strategies is a

means to an end and not an end in and of itself" (Reutzel & Cooter, 2009, p. 193). If a teacher keeps the overarching goal of creating thoughtful readers in mind, then the purpose is set for readers' understanding. Understanding begins with engagement and active participation. "A reader's repertoire of strategies needs to be flexible enough to solve comprehension with words, sentences, or overall meaning " (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 28).

For the purpose of this research, I believe that it is important to examine each strategy separately, since are the strategies are the heart behind teaching children how to read, so it is important to know what the research says about specific strategies. However, unequivocally, the research indicates that it is the integration of these strategies that leads to strategic readers (Allington, 2006; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Oliver & Zimmermann, 2007; Reutzel & Cooter, 2009; Tompkins, 2010). In learning a new strategy, Barnhouse & Vinton note that "it is important to keep [the strategy] in the forefront of one's mind, but once it becomes a mastered skill, it no longer becomes necessary to be considered so deliberately" (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, p. 25). As Harvey & Goudvis (2007) say, "Comprehension strategies are interrelated, and we don't keep this a secret from kids" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 29).

Monitoring/Metacognition

According to Reutzel & Cooter's research, "The National Reading Panel (2000) found that teaching students to monitor the status of their own ongoing comprehension to determine when it breaks down is one of a handful of

scientifically supported, evidence-based comprehension instructional strategies" (Reutzel & Cooter, 2009, p. 177).

Tompkins defines monitoring as an "inner conversation that students carry on in their heads with the text as they read – expressing wonder, making connections, asking questions, reacting to information, drawing conclusions, noticing confusions" (Tompkins, 2010, p. 267). Harvey and Goudvis consider monitoring the over-arching theme in which all other comprehension falls under. Morrow (2009) found that Gunning (2003) defines self-monitoring as the same as metacognition. Monitoring for comprehension is explicitly engaging with one's self to check for understanding and learning: both reading and thinking actively.

Questioning

Barnhouse & Vinton (2012), Oliver & Zimmermann (2007) and Tompkins (2010) agree that questions are key to engagement. Questions come from curiosity and a desire to know more. As Oliver & Zimmermann succinctly put it, "the root of *question* is *quest"* (Oliver & Zimmermann, 2007, p. 107). Questions lead to more questions, both clarifying confusions and deepening understanding (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Oliver & Zimmermann, 2007; Tompkins, 2010).

Children are natural questioners. It is our job as teachers to harness their natural questions and teach them how to apply this process to the texts they read. Harvey & Goudvis underscore that "our students need to know that their questions matter. They need to see us asking questions as well as answering them" (Harvey &

Goudvis, 2007, p. 109). Morrow (2009) and Reutzel & Cooter (2009) second the idea of modeling questions, Reutzel & Cooter emphasize the effectiveness of the model.

The reason it is important to model and explicitly teach how to ask questions is because, according to Tompkins, "the questions students ask shape their comprehension: If they ask literal questions, their comprehension will be literal, but if students generate inferential, critical, and evaluative questions, their comprehension will be higher-level" (Tompkins, 2010, p. 267). Moreover, some children do not even know that they should be asking any kind of questions. Questions are a natural way for students to interact with their text and begin to think as they read, spawning from their curiosity, confusion, and "quest" towards understanding.

Background Knowledge/Schema

The research indicates that students are able to comprehend more and read more difficult texts if they have a higher level of background knowledge on the topic (Leland, et. al, 2013). Moreover, each reader brings with them his or her personal experiences and uses them to help personalize and engage with texts (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007).

Activating background knowledge is critical (Oliver & Zimmerman 2007; Reutzel & Cooter, 2009). Harvey & Goudvis suggest to begin instruction with familiar, relatable texts to ease into teaching new ways of thinking. One's background knowledge and schema directly relates to the questions one has about the text, the connections she is able to make, the predictions she has, and how one

determines what is important (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Oliver & Zimmermann, 2007). As noted before, these strategies are inter-related, and activating knowledge and schema is one way to connect other strategies by making the text personal and the reading active.

On the other hand, Barnhouse & Vinton warn against too much frontloading of information because "we run the risk of reinforcing the idea that students cannot deeply engage with a text unless they already have some knowledge about its content" (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, p. 92). They support this theory with an example from science-fiction text. Moreover, they argue that when students activate knowledge to make initial predictions, they will ignore clues in the text that do not support their initial ideas. Dewey (1933) said that a child must be engaged in his learning process because experiences are remembered more easily retained than what you are forced to memorize. Dewey believed in the organization and re-organization of experiences. He stressed the importance of social activity, interaction, and collaborative learning.

In my experiences, I have witnessed first graders read through series, each time comprehending more, because of their level of experience with similar texts and authors. Experiences can range from prior knowledge of the form and genre of the text as well as its content. It is more difficult to understand *Nate the Great* by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat without understanding what a detective is or the idea of a mystery format. Readers bring with them their experiences and background knowledge – that is a given. It is a point of entry for students and a place to begin to question or empathize. Like with questioning, more information can be generative

to further question and deepen understanding. When applying one's background knowledge and using all of these strategies, it is important to teach a student to keep a level of flexibility with one's ideas: the point of reading is to learn and think more.

Connections

Using our background knowledge and schema allows readers to make connections to the text. As Harvey & Goudvis write, "Our prior experience and background knowledge fuel the connections we make" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 92). According to them, there are three types of connections: text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world. Connecting with the text is a way to actively engage and participate. Relating and comparing are initial entry points towards understanding. The purpose of making these connections is to enhance understanding by connecting new information with one's schema, help monitor our own understanding, and increase engagement.

Although for young learners connections may be superficial, such as having the same name, Harvey & Goudvis (2007) argue that these connections may be recognized as a "connection in common" and can lead to a student's engagement. Students' thinking should be validated, but, as Collins adds, it is most important to help students question and reflect on their connections and how that aids their understanding (Collins, 2004; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). The most important part to emphasize is that as students are reading, they are *thinking* simultaneously.

Visualizing

When students apply their senses to what they are reading, they are further interacting and comprehending. Oliver and Zimmermann (2007) concur that describing imagery enhances comprehension because it is through the senses that some texts may come alive. Images are a way for text to be incorporated into our schema and our own understanding. Collins suggests that "one way we can begin to teach children to visualize is to reread a short text to them that they know really well […] and we apply our senses to think about how the setting sounds, smells, and, feels" (Collins, 2004, p. 172). However, as teachers, as with questioning and connecting, we need to push our students to ask them explicitly how visualizing helped them better understand what they were reading and thinking about.

Research indicates that proficient readers are already creating mental images as they read (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Keene & Zimmermann, 2007). Furthermore, Harvey & Goudvis touch upon the connection between visualizing and inferential thinking because "when we visualize, we are in fact inferring, but with mental images rather than words and thoughts" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 130).

To me, visualizing is an important part of reading to help gain comprehension because it is another mode of understanding. It activates different, non-verbal parts of your brain and helps students engage, while also paying close attention to language and description. Additionally, this helps students to develop empathy and a way to gain understanding of a character as well.

Predicting

Lapp et al. define predicting as "monitoring as you read for the purpose of anticipating what might reasonably happen next (Lapp, et al., 2005, p. 189). Students have to use their schema combined with knowledge of what they have read so far, in order to make predictions (Tompkins, 2010). Collins (2004) indicates that students may even begin to predict at the word level: students use picture clues and phonemic awareness, using decoding strategies coupled then with active thinking to ask themselves does the word that they predict make sense in the context? Therefore, predictions are a monitoring tool that encourages engagement for students to follow-up on their thinking beginning at the word-level and continuing throughout.

Barnhouse & Vinton warn that students' predictions may lead them to remain literal thinkers because they may "struggle to get past the event-level of plot, which predictions encourage them to stick to, and to miss the deeper less visible layer (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, p. 162).

In my opinion, I agree that predicting is a useful comprehension strategy in that it perpetuates readers' engagement and monitoring. Students need to apply their thoughts of what they know to be able to make a prediction. I would add, and have taught, that the prediction is almost a "best-guess" to a question a reader may have, and then the engaged and thoughtful reader must keep reading to look if his or her prediction is correct. The key, like with all of these strategies, is to maintain and teach explicitly that students thinking while reading should be flexible and fluid. Reading is a personal, interactive task that is thinking.

Retelling

Research suggests that retelling is a way for students to actively participate, practice language skills, and gain story sense (Morrow, 2009) because it is a way of engaging in "holistic comprehension and organization of thought." Morrow (2009) asserts that listening to a student's retelling reflects the child's understanding because a retelling may demonstrate both literal and inferential thinking. The comprehensive research of Reutzel& Cooter conclude that retelling is the most effective way to find elucidate child's understanding because

> Asking children to retell a story or information text involves reconstructing the entire text structure, including the major elements, details, and sequence. In stories, children retell using story structure, including the story sequence and the important elements of the plot; in addition, they make inferences and note relevant details. Retelling can be used to assess children's memory for story and information text (Reutzel & Cooter, 2009, p. 161).

Collins (2004) adds the importance of stressing that when teachers teach how to retell a story, it is important to highlight the purpose behind it: people retell stories for authentic purposes all the time.

It seems to me that retelling is a form of assessment for teachers and is one way for students to make visible for teachers their understanding through their responses. It is also a starting point for learning to summarize and incorporate inferential and evaluative opinions. Strategies build upon each other. Before a student is able to summarize, she starts with a retelling.

Summarizing

Summarizing, therefore, as defined by Harvey & Goudvis, "is about retelling the information and paraphrasing it. When readers summarize, they need to sift

and sort through large amounts of information to extract essential ideas" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 19). Tompkins (2010) underscores the importance of focusing on the most important ideas in order to summarize.

Oliver & Zimmermann (2007) believe that students benefit from going beyond simply a "succinct retelling" by including their schema, thoughts, opinions, etc., (i.e. synthesizing) to gain deeper levels of understanding.

By comparing the research on proficient readers Oliver & Zimmermann (2007) found that summarizing is a way to help remember and communicate what they know. The research of Reutzel & Cooter from the work of Brown, Day, & Jones (1983) confirms that not proficient readers do not "spontaneously summarize their reading and, as a result, have poor understanding and recall of what they read" (Reutzel & Cooter, 2009, p. 184).

It seems that the key take-way from the research on summarizing is that its most important aspect is a student's ability to determine the important aspects of the text and then succinctly retell what they have read. This involves synthesizing and a great deal of thinking.

Determining Importance

An explicit strategy that may be over-looked is determining importance. Oliver & Zimmermann (2007) emphasize that especially in the age of information that we are currently living in, it is important to be critical. Picking out the key information is what separates retelling and summarizing (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). When something is important, you remember it. Setting a purpose is another way to

determine what to remember and what is important (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). Therefore, determining importance is a critical part of reading because it helps prioritize one's thinking and focus attention.

Higher Level Comprehension Strategies

Based on the research, inferring takes the reader one step beyond summarizing (Barnhouse & Vinton; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). Therefore, inferring, like summarizing, is a higher-level strategy that involves and incorporates previous deep textual thinking. It requires the reader to not only determine the main point and use what is in the text, but also what is implied and not explicitly stated. It is the "proverbial reading between the lines" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 131). Barnhouse & Vinton (2012) conclude that in order to understand, one needs to infer on a large scale.

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If reading is thinking, then the question becomes what should students be thinking about? How do they make meaning and understand? Students should be questioning what they are reading, monitoring the importance of the words, the structure, the themes…asking themselves if it makes sense. Students should be relating it to themselves and incorporating it into their own personal schema. In essence, they should be using the comprehension strategies simultaneously and fluidly as a means to understand, create meaning, think and read their chosen texts. That is what keeps them invested, active participants in reading, engaged and motivated to continue to read, and hopefully become life-long readers and learners.

Teacher's Role

Thus far, the skills and definitions of *what* to be taught have been examined, but it is equally important to identify and explore the *who* that is doing the teaching. As mentioned previously when defining comprehension, Reutzel & Cooter (2009) emphasize the importance of the situational context and activity in reading comprehension. The teacher is responsible for creating that environment in which those activities take place and learning occurs. Collins believes that "it's crucial for us to consider the whole day of our teaching, the classroom tone and expectations we set from arrival to dismissal, and our belief system about teaching and learning" (Collins, 2004, pg. 2). Research indicates that when a teacher creates an **engaging environment**, is **reflective** on her own **goals** and **identity as a reader,** she supports the learning and teaching of higher-level readers and thinkers.

Engaging Environment

Teachers need to promote a space where students feel safe and respected and are willing to take risks, while emphasizing the importance of authentic literature, reflection, and enjoyment. But how does one create such a classroom culture?

In classrooms where students feel comfortable, they can contribute to conversations, collaborations and practice newly formed skills (Collins, 2004; Tompkins, 2010). One way to help students feel safe is to show zero-tolerance for disrespectful behavior "directed at anyone, whether it's subtle like eye-rolling or overt like talking back" (Collins, 2004, pg. 6), and emphasize and speak candidly

with students that we all are different: “we all have different reading needs and tastes, just as we all have different heights, hair colors, or numbers of loose and missing teeth” (Collins, 2004, pg. 21). Harvey & Goudvis concur, adding that

> classrooms where children’s personal histories are valued serve as learning communities that respect differences. Before teachers can create a climate of mutual respect, they must help kids understand and value differences. Sharing books that kids connect with sparks their in reading and builds community” (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 68)

Tompkins adds that “in a community of learners, students enjoy social interaction and feel connected to their classmates and their teacher” (Tompkins, 2010,p. 278). The idea of a “community of learners” evokes the ideal where students feel safe, respected, and work together towards the common goal of learning.

The attitudes of this community are necessarily influenced by the teacher. Teachers promote the valuing of respect and individual differences through the use of authentic literature. Leland et al. posit that “authentic literature study involves students reading lots of texts, discussing their reading with others, and using writing and the arts to develop their ideas about how texts might be positioning them and others” (Leland, et al, 2013, pg. 97). Without authentic texts, students are less likely to engage, be interested, and be active participants in their reading (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). By spending time and reading interesting, engaging books, students learn to and apply what they learned independently on texts at their skill and interest level (Tompkins, 2010).

Teachers engender a community of learners by creating an environment that values reflection and thinking. As Harvey & Goudvis succinctly put it, ““strategic reading takes hold in classrooms that value student thinking” (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 37). Leland et al. warn against creating

> an environment where children rush through piles of books without taking time to draw all they can from each book. We need to teach children to linger with great reads, reread parts that matter or from which they can learn more, and return to texts when they realize they can make more of the information because of new knowledge (Lapp, et al., 2005, p. 201).

Reflecting and *thinking* take time. As all teachers know, there is never enough time in the day, the week, or the year. One shows value to something by giving it sufficient time in one's classroom. Oliver & Zimmerman specifically indicate the importance of putting in "work to create an ethic in the classroom that *values longer periods of time for reflection*" (Oliver & Zimmermann, 2007, pg. 152).

Most importantly, a teacher wants to develop a feeling of and atmosphere of enjoyment around reading. Harvey & Goudvis (2007) underscore their belief in the importance of *interest* in *comprehension*. Leland et al. note that "If, however, book experiences focus more on reading instruction than reading enjoyment, learners may pay more attention to correctness and getting the right answers" (Leland, et al, 2013, pg. 6). A good teacher is not teaching discrete skills, but teaching a complete person: "a steady diet of skill exercises has the exact opposite effect. Instead of seeing reading as something they like to do and want to do, children come to see it as tedious work that offers no reward" (Leland, et al, 2013, pg. 29). Barnhouse & Vinton advise to "move from teaching texts [and skills] to teaching readers" (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, pg. 163). A reader's interest necessarily relates to her level of interest and engagement, and thus the amount of thinking she is cable of by actively interacting with her text, i.e. reading.

Teacher Reflection

In a classroom that values thinking and reflection, it is equally important that the teacher herself is reflective and from the beginning sets up goals. Leland et al. point out that "it's easy to get caught up in activities without stopping to think about how helpful they are in developing your students' ability to think critically" (Leland, et al, 2013, pg. 97). To do so, according Barnhouse & Vinton, teachers "must always think long and hard about what we need to do to help students transfer knowledge gained from one experience to another and from one text to the next" (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, pg. 191), especially if the goal "is to teach the process of making meaning, not to direct the students to a particular meaning" (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, pg. 65).

But what is the goal? Clearly goal setting is an important, reflective process that helps students and teachers be explicit about achievement. Collins (2004) has a two-pronged approach in developing units of study: what should be covered and what students should know. Gambrell, Malloy, and Mazzoni (2007) "recommend that teachers develop a vision of what they hope to achieve with the students they teach and then work to accomplish their plans" (in Tompkins, 2010,p. 6).

In this context, the research is clear, teaching comprehension strategies as a goal in and of themselves, is not the answer. Strategies are a means for comprehending and thinking (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Oliver & Zimmermann, 2007; Reutzel & Cooter, 2009; Tompkins, 2010). Teaching children comprehension is teaching children how to think and therefore read. "Reading actually makes you smarter (Stanovich 2000), and our kids need to know this" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 36).

Life-Long Readers

However, the overarching goal of a reading teacher should be to help students become life long learners. As Leland et al. put it, it is important not to just learn to read, but to become "independent readers who see themselves as capable of solving their own reading problems" (Leland, et al, 2013, pg. 38). The important thing is that reading is not seen as just a school activity. Collins stresses her desire for "children to know that reading is a life activity, something you can choose to do because it brings you pleasure and knowledge" (Collins, 2004, pg. 246).

Being a reader is an identity that teachers can foster in all students. Collins (2004) highlights the importance of emphasizing purpose of reading and looking for real-life, out of school examples of real readers. Tompkins defines that purpose as comprehension:

> Comprehension is the goal of reading; it's the reason why people read. Students must understand what they're reading to learn from the experience; they must make sense of the words in the text to maintain interest; and they must enjoy reading to become lifelong readers" (Tompkins, 2010,p. 256)

To become a reader, it "requires more than mastering a bunch of unconnected skills" (Leland, et al, 2013, pg. 29)

*Teacher **as** Reader*

To create passionate readers, the teachers must be passionate readers themselves, or at least, as indicated by the research, competent readers (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012; Reutzel & Cooter, 2009, p. 7). Awareness of one's own reading process allows teachers to explicitly teach and understand how to teach comprehension (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Oliver & Zimmermann, 2007; Reutzel &

Gooter, 2009). Oliver & Zimmermann highlight the expert reading teachers are "those teachers who have a thorough understanding of the reading process and the determination to understand and respond to each child's needs as a reader" (Oliver & Zimmermann, 2007, pg.23).

Tompkins (2010) and Harvey (2007) add that, more than just being a competent reader, it is the passionate reader who has greater success. "Enthusiasm for books is contagious" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 70). "It seems obvious that when teachers show that they care about their students and exhibit excitement and enthusiasm for learning, students are more likely to become engaged" (Tompkins, 2010,p. 278).

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I believe, that just as we model specific strategies and how to think, teachers should model excitement and enthusiasm and *be* what they want to instill: *life-long, passionate, readers*. I identify with Atwell's sentiment: "For me reading is the equivalent of breathing chocolate air" (Atwell, 1998, p.133). If the research indicates that enjoyment is key to engagement, then a teacher's enjoyment of *reading* and of *teaching of reading* should be palpable in the classroom environment that she creates.

Teaching Methodology

The way to teach comprehension strategies is through explicit teaching. Reading involves many invisible processes that require the competent and reflective teacher to recognize those processes and bring them to light for the student, so the

student can consciously apply those skills to better understand and engage with the texts she encounters throughout her literate life. Ultimately, the teacher's goal is to gradually release the responsibility of learning from the teacher to the student to become independent, responsible readers and thinkers.

Explicit Teaching towards a Gradual Release of Responsibility

The research overwhelmingly indicates that explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies leads to improved understanding of texts (Bauman & Bergeron, 1993; Block and Pressley, 2002; Block, Gambrell, and Pressley 2002; Brown, Pressley, Van Meter & Shuder, 1996; Dole, Brown, & Trathen, 1996; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Morrow, 1985; National Reading Panel, 2000; Reutzel & Cooter, 2009; Ruddell and Unrau 2004).

Tompkins reasons the importance of explicit teaching is the fact that "students need explicit instruction about reading strategies because they don't acquire the knowledge through reading" (Tompkins, 2010,p. 51). According to Barnhouse & Vinton, "we owe it to our students to be clear, explicit, and focused" (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, pg. 63). One way to do that, they argue, is to notice and name the processes, "making visible and explicit the complicated work of reading" (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, pg. 189).

The teacher needs to bring to light and demonstrate the invisible processes of reading to make them explicit and visible to the student. The teacher then provides guidance, scaffolding, time and space for the student to practice with each other in large groups, small groups, pairs, and ultimately with independence. The

goal for the teacher should be to help students first see what the reading looks like, sounds like, and *thinks* like, have ample support and time to practice it, then be able to apply what she has learned in various situations, with various texts, unsupported and independently (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Oliver & Zimmermann, 2007; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Reutzel & Cooter, 2009; Tompkins, 2010).

Modeling

If the goal should be explicitly teaching that which we as teachers and readers think is obvious, Collins (2004) emphasizes modeling thinking helps teachers achieve that goal. According to Oliver & Zimmermann (2007), modeling demonstrates authentic reading and writing behavior to students. Harvey & Goudvis (2007) conclude that it is through modeling – seeing how teachers and readers think and act - that children are able to visualize and understand what they should do independently.

Two related forms of modeling are think-alouds and read-alouds. Harvey & Goudvis define think-alouds as a way to "peel back the layers of our thinking, show kids how we approach text, and make visible how understanding happens in a variety of reading contexts" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 45). Oliver & Zimmermann (2007) suggest co-teaching think alouds as another explicit model to help students see how readers think and approach texts. Lapp et al concur, underscoring that the reading strategies demonstrated during a think aloud "are not just strategies for reading; they are strategies for thinking" (Lapp et al., 2005, p. 191). When students then model the behavior of the teachers and apply the think-aloud techniques to

their own reading, they become more strategic, thoughtful readers (Lapp et al, 2005; Tompkins, 2010).

On the other hand, Barnhouse & Vinton disagree. They believe that think-aloud strategies may in fact limit students because while "their ostensible purpose is to show students *how,* not *what,* to think, […] yet we've found that what students take away is *what* we made of the text" (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, pg. 92). They believe that instead of modeling our thoughts as teachers, we need to give students the tools to think independently (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012).

I would argue with Barnhouse & Vinton that think-alouds are a way to model different tools. One important thing to keep in mind is the developmentally appropriate nature of the strategies presented to the children. For example, Tompkins (2010) notes the research of Samuels (2002) on the importance of fluency as a factor in reading comprehension. Reading aloud leaves cognitive functioning available for comprehending if the text demands are too great for younger students (Tompkins, 2010). Harvey & Goudvis (2007) note that while decoding is not a factor in read alouds, it is not helping improve fluency, but "fluency is not synonymous with comprehension" (Lapp, et al., 2005, p. 46).

Reutzel & Cooter (2009) cite the work of RAND Reading Study Group that conclude that reading comprehension strategies should be taught at the beginning of reading instruction. Therefore, read alouds are a perfect bridge for less fluent readers to be exposed to texts they could not read for themselves. Leland et al support the supposition that "all children benefit from hearing many stories read aloud and having lots of conversations about books" (Leland, et al, 2013, p. 40), and

Lapp et al (2005) adds that students need to hear more complex texts more frequently. Additionally, Tompkins posits "children probably benefit from listening to a book read aloud two times or reading it several times before participating in the discussion" (Tompkins, 2010,p. 342).

Read alouds serve a myriad of academic purposes. According to research by Rasinski (2003), they increase vocabulary and motivation. Moreover, as Tompkins (2010) writes, it is another form of modeling: modeling fluency, expression, thoughts, and strategies. Most importantly, though, it is the interactive nature of read alouds that aid in comprehension (Morrow, 2009). Tompkins' (2010) research support that the most important thing about read-alouds is *how* teachers engage with their students *during* the process. Leland et al promote read alouds by highlighting

> when learners are read to, they see how language works, what it looks like in action, and how rewarding it can be to take part in language events, understand hat a story is, how authors give life to their stories, and the role of text and pictures in conveying meaning (Leland, et al, 2013, pg. 22).

This, in fact, is modeling at its best.

Moreover, read alouds are enjoyable! They can be considered "as a type of advertising for literacy that gets listeners interested in topics, books, and reading in general" (Leland, et al, 2013, pg. 17). Barnhouse & Vinton agree that it is because they are "so compelling and enjoyable makes it the ideal platform from which to offer students an introduction to the big work of reading" (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, pg. 67). Leland et al define a read aloud as "a dramatic performance in which the reader uses his or her voice to interpret the story orally" (Leland, et al, 2013, pg. 21) and find that "good conversations often get even better when some drama is

added to the read aloud" (Leland, et al, 2013, pg.20). In fact, Oliver & Zimmermann warn that "comprehension strategy instruction should never, ever cut into the time teachers spend reading aloud to their students, just for the joy of the story" (Oliver & Zimmermann, 2007, pg. 37).

The Importance of Conversation

The research clearly indicates that conversation breeds comprehension. Talk is a collaborative way to construct meaning and understanding (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012; Collins, 2004; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Lapp, et al., 2005; Leland et al, 2013; Morrow, 2009; Reutzel & Cooter, 2009; Roser & Martinez, 1995).

Along with modeling thinking and reading, an important thing teacher's model is specifically how to talk. Teachers need to explicitly teach how children can "communicate their ideas with clarity and purpose" (Lapp, et al., 2005, p. 202), Research indicates that this is achieved through multiple exposures of modeled thinking language at every opportunity. Teachers help restate and reshape children's contributions to class discussions to expand thinking and clarify confusions (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Oliver & Zimmerma, 2009). Moreover, Lapp et al (2005) encourage basing these examples in the students' experiences, words, and texts.

According to the Report of the National Reading Panel (2000), classroom discussion creates the best context to increase reading comprehension (Reutzel & Cooter, 2009). Some common practices that teachers use to increase purposeful talk in their classroom is Partner Shares (Lapp, et al., 2005; Leland et al, 2013;

Pierce, 1996) Turn-and-Talks during read alouds (Collins, 2004), and Say Something (Leland, et al 2013, Short et al, 1996). These are different activities that encourage conversation during reading instruction and independent reading that have students discuss with one or more peers about what they are thinking: thinking leads to comprehension. Moreover, Tompkins (2010) writes that working with other classmates lead to higher engagement and more opportunities for active engagement.

Collins writes "time to talk and think about books with other readers helps children make meaning and supports deeper comprehension" (Collins, 2004, pg. 21). Unfortunately, as noted before, there is never enough time for teaching, and it is the allotment of time that shows a teacher's value in a given thing. Harvey & Goudvis found, that despite all the research,

> As a matter of fact, purposeful student-to-student talk is probably the most underrepresented teaching and learning practice that we can think of. We work hard to increase the amount of purposeful talk in our classrooms, because there is not better way to understand that we read than simply to talk about it" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 53)

In fact, Leland et al. (2013) found that in a classroom where students were given fewer opportunities to share, students would call out anyway, leading to management issues. In summation on the importance of conversing, as Collins best puts it, as teachers "we teach [students] how readers make sure they understand texts by thinking as they read and talking about the stories with others" (Collins, 2004, pg. 21).

Listening is intimately linked with talking. As with talking, students need to be explicitly taught how to actively listen as well. Both Collins (2004) and Harvey & Goudvis (2007) write that students need to be taught how to listen in order to

respond, question and expand on what others are thinking. As Harvey & Goudvis put it, "active listening is at the heart of thoughtful conversation and discussion" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 53).

Text Selection

Along with explicit teaching, book selection should be done with explicit intentionality. On the one hand, Reutzel & Cooter select books "providing explicit comprehension strategy instruction on comprehension monitoring" (Reutzel & Cooter, 2009, p. 186). On the other hand, Barnhouse & Vinton "choose texts to support the value of reading and the process of making meaning rather than to practice strategies" (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, pg. 66). There are also benefits to predictable texts for emergent readers because "it encourages a stand of reading for understanding right from the beginning" (Leland, et al, 2013, p. 23). Overall, the research seems to indicate that text should be chosen thoughtfully and with the goal of comprehension in mind. Leland, et al, speak to the "strong connection between the books we choose to read and critical literacy" that "underpins our goals of growing literate beings" (Leland et al, 2013, p. 60).

Other Literacies

Along with the reading of authentic, good texts, comprehension and meaning is demonstrated through other modalities. Although the focus is on reading comprehension, the heart of understanding texts is not limited to reading. As discussed earlier, talking and listening play an important role in meaning

construction, as do drama and drawing. Leland et al "believe that in order to expand everyone's communication potential, the arts – in all their expressive forms – need to become a seamless part of the reading and language arts curriculum" (Leland, et al, 2013, pg. 127). Moreover, Lapp et al found in their research that Vygotsky (1978) noted that "children need to develop their literacies (listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing) while engaged in purposeful, meaning-centered literacy activities" (Lapp, et al., 2005, p. 7).

Dramatic arts are a way for students to be actively engaged and delve deeper into their understanding of characters (Lapp et al, 2005; Leland, et al 2013). For example, **Process Drama** helps students make connections with and play with cause and effect (Edmiston & Enciso, 2002; Enisoc, 2011; Leland, et al, 2013; O'Neill, 1995; Miller & Saxton, 2004). **Tapping In** and **Hot Seat** (see Reading Strategies: Questioing, Part B, Lesson 4) help students question characters emotions and begin to develop empathy (Lapp et al, 2005; Tompkins, 2007). The practicing of plays for **Reader's Theater** not only builds fluency and expressive reading, which aids with comprehension as noted above, but also allows for students to play with interpretations of text, empathetic skills, and deeper understanding (Lapp et al, 2005; Tompkins, 2007).

Drawing is another way to tap into understanding. In primary classrooms, it is evident that early literacy and understanding is manifested in children's drawing, However, just like read alouds, drawing can be used as a tool for understanding in both higher grades, for constructing deeper meaning and understanding. **Sketch-to-Stretch** is one such technique that helps students to focus on thinking about

various interpretations, meaning, and sharing their work (Leland et al, 2013, Short & Harste, 1996; Tompkins, 2010).

Overall, Leland et al (2013) state it best: "The arts not only add enjoyment, they add a depth that is impossible, we believe, to reach without including them" (Leland, et al, 2013, pg. 135). Enjoyment involves active engagement, active thinking, deeper comprehension and thinking around texts expressed in different modes.

Assessment

An important aspect of teaching is determining whether or not a student understands and learns. As teachers, assessing is a vital part of our daily work not only to make sure we have done our job, but how we can improve. As Reutzel & Cooter put it:

> Master teachers are able to quickly assess each student's knowledge, create instructional roadmaps of what children know, and then teach students according to their specific needs. Assessment happens in these classrooms, *before, during,* and *after* instruction has taken place. Assessment is essential for making sure every student receives appropriate instruction, and then verifying that learning has taken place (Reutzel & Cooter, 2009, p. 16-17)

Assessing is the foundation of planning, teaching, and learning to help students become thinkers. We, as teachers, need to know what they know, what they need to know, and how much we have reached them, adjusting along the way (Reutzel & Cooter, 2009). This requires teachers to have specific goals that are made explicit to both ourselves and our students (Leland, et al, 2013).

If we consider reading as not only more than decoding but as thinking, how, do we assess this invisible process? As noted earlier, the research indicates the

importance of teaching explicitly coupled with metacognition. The same goes for assessment. Oliver & Zimmermann (2007) found that:

> Traditional practices in which comprehension instruction was really comprehension *assessment* - asking students an endless string of comprehension questions or asking them to retell what they read instead of to share their thinking often failed to teach children how to better understand what they read. Teaching reading meant dealing with the visible and audible manifestations of reading, rather than the cognitive aspects (Oliver & Zimmermann, 2007, p. 27).

It is the "cognitive aspects" that need to be highlighted and assessed to be seen clearly.

Most of the research indicates that the best types of classroom assessments are through direct observations (Leland et al, 2013; Morrow, 2009; Reutzel & Cooter, 2009). One can observe a lot from a child's interactions from and conversations around books independently, in small groups, and in whole class discussions (Leland et al, 2013; Morrow, 2009). When listening to children's responses, a teacher is able to assess the depth – literal, inferential, or evaluative – of a students thinking. This can be demonstrated though a retelling, rewriting, dramatization, questions or shares during a story (Morrow, 2009). Reutzel & Cooter (2009) call the "systematic observation of children in the reading act" **kid-watching,** (Reutzel & Cooter, 2009, p.209). The important part of these observations include recording the data, through checklists or anecdotal records, in some sort of systematic way to *use* the information to affect your teaching to help the students learn. Using the common core standards can serve as a reference for developing checklists or analyzing anecdotal information.

Along with observing kids actions and conversations, what students produce as work samples may serve as assessments. Leland et al define work samples as

devices: “The devices students keep for organizing and sharing during the study are ready made for self, peer, or teacher assessment. The same goes for the products and/or presentations that are part of the study’s culminating experience” (Leland et al, 2013, p. 120). Leland et al, (2013) stress two important things about assessing products: that it should be analyzed, reflected, and revisited to help students consider where they should go next in a study as part of metacognitive teaching and reflection; and the second aspect is that feedback should be constructive and highlight positives.

Overall, the research indicates that the goal for assessment is that it “should reflect instructional objectives and strategies. It should include evaluation of a wide range of skills used in many contexts” (Morrow, 2009, p. 128). What is important to keep in mind is that the point of assessing is to help students learn. Each child is different. As Harvey & Goudvis advise, it is important to “consider what our kids need to learn, what they are reading, and which strategies will best facilitate their learning. Above all, we take our cue from the kids” (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 35).

A Larger goal of Kindness

Children’s learning does not occur in a vacuum. Skills and strategies are meaningless if students do not use them to help create, as Dewey (1933) a “democratic society.” Part of every teacher and parent’s goal should be to help raise *kind* people. Theoretically, this should not be difficult. In Kohn’s research he found that being “antisocial is neither logically nor chronologically prior to, nor more

natural than, the prosocial. We are disposed to reach out to others from our earliest years" (Kohn, 1990, p. 7). Moreover, Kohn (199) found the same true of empathy.

However, as he points out, "raising children with care – and to care – is an enormously difficult undertaking under the best of circumstances. And our society, with its emphasis on competitive individualism, creates circumstances that are unusually trying" (Kohn, 1990, p. 96). It seems that since learning occurs in school, then school would be a logical place for this teaching to occur (Kohn, 1990). Corlett (2009) argues that historically, there was a curriculum of ethics – although that it is debatable – one obvious fact is that this is no longer the case.

Kohn (1990) explains that there are three main reasons that prosocial behaviors are not taught in schools: (1) neither the state nor the country can be seen to push a moral agenda; (2) if one is taught kindness and empathy, he is not being prepared to face society's cruel nature; and (3) there is simply not enough time to teach kindness; it will get in the way of teaching academics.

However, despite outlining and understanding the arguments against teaching prosocial behaviors in the classroom, Kohn (1990) further explains why these reasons are in fact unreasonable:

(1) Pushing a Moral Agenda

It may be believed that morals and values are best left to the parents and should be taught at the home. We live in a democratic society with freedom of religion, freedom of thought, freedom of press, etc. However, this argument assumes that a classroom is an objective place. Every decision, action and inaction

of a teacher - and a parent - influence and shape a child whether that is the intention or not (Kohn, 1990). As Eccles writes,

> Every decision we [as teachers] make, every judgment we administer, every interaction with a child, demonstrates what we value and serves as a model for our students about what really counts in life, in being human. Every curriculum choice, every pedagogical method, every assessment, reveals what we consider important (Eccles, 1993, p. 6-7).

Actively encouraging empathy, caring, sharing, and helping behaviors can (and should be) be a conscious choice. This would not "*introduce* values into a neutral environment, [but…] examine the values already in place and trade them in for a new set" (Kohn, 1990, p. 165).

Moreover, as Kohn puts it, "There is nothing subversive – except in the literal sense of subverting selfishness- about a plan to raise children to be nicer and more caring people" (Kohn, 1990, p.166). In fact, if children do *not* learn this in school, they may not get these lessons from the home. Additionally, receiving lessons and encouraging of kindness in both environments "is a highly desirable form of redundancy" (Kohn, 1990, p. 165).

(2) Society is cruel

We do live in a society in which competition is valued. Our American culture values competition over helping and caring, and competition focuses single-mindedly on self interest to obtain success (Kohn, 1990). On the other hand, even with these values, he found that "there is nothing about caring for others that implies not caring for, or looking after, oneself. Assertiveness, healthy self-esteem, and popularity are all compatible with, and even correlates of, a prosocial orientation" (Kohn, 1990, p. 166).

A school is a place where students necessarily work in an environment with other students. If they are taught, through competition that success is a zero-sum game in which other's success impedes their own, then this perpetuates an anti-social, negative societal message (Kohn, 1990). Alternatively, students can learn through cooperation and collaboration. Cooperation is a "humanizing experience" which teaches perspective taking and empathy, and promotes prosocial behaviors and actions (Kohn, 1990, p. 93).

(3) Not Academic

According to Kohn (1990), research has proven that cooperative versus competitive learning not only creates higher levels of achievement, but it also promotes working together and prosocial behaviors. Moreover, some teachers have adopted cooperative learning models specifically to enhance academic achievement and found the prosocial behaviors as an added and unintended bonus in their classrooms (Kohn, 1990).

As Kohn (1990) succinctly sums it up:

> *Not only are the ingredients of a prosocial orientation conducive to academic excellence, but the educational process itself does not require a choice between teaching children to think and teaching them to care* (Kohn, 1990, p. 167) (my emphasis added).

Therefore, it seems pretty clear that school should be a place to help promote teaching children to be caring citizens. But how can that be accomplished?

* * *

As noted above cooperative and collaborative learning is one aspect of a learning environment that promotes prosocial behaviors. Early in the paper,

classroom culture was discussed regarding its importance of how students learn. This is no less important in helping students learn how to be kind. A classroom can be a microcosm for the larger world. The difference is the teacher and students get to create it together. The importance in creating a community of learners is to create an environment where a child feels safe and respected, which promotes academic success. Furthermore, in creating an environment that engenders prosocial behavior, the way discipline, rules, and control are implemented are factors as well. Part of being kind is positive feelings towards oneself. Kohn's research found that "when children feel rotten, they are apt to be less generous" (Kohn, 1990, p. 74). A direct correlation between self-esteem and a prosocial attitudes and behaviors has been found (Kohn, 1990).

Although Kohn (1990) considers discouraging aggression as separate from promoting prosocial behavior, the first step to being kind is to learn how to not be mean. One way to do this is to make it explicitly clear that unkind behaviors are unacceptable. This is important for parents (Kohn, 1990) and teachers alike to emphasize (Collins, 2004). It is in our control as teachers "to make sure our students understand that disrespectful behavior directed at anyone, whether it's subtle like eye-rolling or overt like talking back, is not acceptable" (Collins, 2004, pg. 6).

A classroom should be a place where students may have the opportunity to practice sharing and helping and therefore begin to think of themselves as caring people (Kohn, 1990). Again, similarly to teaching methods discussed above, Kohn (1990) found that it is both the modeling and direct teaching of kindness that is

most effective. Both parents and teachers help a child's development by consistently modeling "helping and caring behavior, and they become the sorts of figures who can easily be objects of identification as well as effective instructors of values" (Kohn, 1990, p. 88). Along with modeling and explicit instruction, Kohn (1990) also found and underscores the importance of explaining *why* these behaviors are important. He writes that

> It seems that setting out rules and expectations becomes far more effective when accompanied by explanations fitted to the child's age and ability to understand. Just as children should be made to understand why hitting is bad, so they must hear why – not only be told that – helping is good (Kohn, 1990, p.90)

Without the key understanding and a feeling of being controlled, a child may only behave with the mindset of trying not to get caught, as opposed to a desire to do good. Being good should not be taught on the basis of self-interest, but as a concern for others (Kohn, 1990). A school is a perfect environment to model, teach, explain, practice, and engender these behaviors. Much like with reading or any academic learning, it is when the student has an active role in either the practice of these behaviors or even in determining rules and consequences that help students develop these attitudes (Kohn, 1990).

The teaching of reading and comprehension is the perfect segue into developing empathy (Barnhouse & Vinton; Collins, 2004; Leland, et al, 2013; Prior, 2013). As Barnhouse & Vinton (2012),

> Stories allow readers to throw their hearts and minds into the lives of others, to live, temporarily, as others live – and to learn from that. This is no small matter in educating students who will be citizens, leaders, and caretakers of our world" (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, pg. 11).

Reading helps us "construct understandings not only of a text but of ourselves and the world around us" (Barnhouse & Vinton, 2012, pg. 41), while the text "serve as

springboards for digging deeper into issues, feelings, and perspectives" (Leland, et al, 2013, pg. 61).

Therefore, I believe, that the teaching of reading as thinking supports the creation of empathetic, kind students. Students should be active participants in their development and given the environment and models of sharing and caring behaviors, with time to practice. This can happen through collaboration, cooperation, and the learning of reading with the purpose and passion to identify with characters and stories, empathize, and uncover feelings and passions. As students become part of a kinder, more empathetic classroom setting, they become more comfortable with different points of view, more able to look at texts in complex ways, more willing to take risks and through this become better "comprehenders" of texts.

Rationale:
Creating Research-Based Reading Comprehension Curriculum:
With Passion through Compassion

By taking into account what experts have said, coupled with personal experiences, I have created a unit on the teaching of Reading Comprehension skills through the lens of both an author study and kindness. I am focusing on three main strategies: **Questioning**, **Retelling**, and **Connecting**, while considering monitoring for meaning the overarching umbrella (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). It is important to do a task analysis of each strategy and create a structure of lessons to serve as a model to be applied to other strategies. The point is that the strategies are inter-related and build upon each other, yet need to be taught explicitly and separately broken into parts. comprehension strategies Questioning, Retelling, and Connecting

By focusing on a theme or particular author, students are challenged to define themselves as readers beyond their current reading level (Leland, 2013). Moreover, Collins contends that "becoming an expert about something is very powerful and motivating for students and teachers alike" (Collins, 2004, pg. 202). Being an expert allows one to delve deeper into thinking (Collins, 2004) and focus on more of a literary analysis (Leland, et al, 2013). One way that a throrough knowledge of an author and his work is powerful is that by developing this "expertise" create confidence in students. As Kohn (1990) writes there is a correlation between positive self-confidence and prosocial behaviors. Therefore an author study may lead to the development of students who engage in sharing,

caring, and cooperative behaviors that lead to a positive community of learners and a higher level of academic achievement.

Lapp et al argue that "children need to explore authors and favorite characters, read and engage in conversations about ways of thinking about reading, read about the passions in their life, and get into the more complex books that just call to them" (Lapp, et al., 2005, p. 57). One way to do that is through a guided discovery of an author. Author studies further allow students to connect to authors as people and thus make reading more personalized (Tompkins, 2010). During an author study, one necessarily re-reads stories, but it is in that repetition students gain more comprehension (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007) by being free to focus more on deeper comprehension rather than basic plot (Oliver & Zimmermann, 2007).

To me, Questioning is essential. If there were two words that describe my approach to elementary teaching, I believe that they are and continue to be ***creativity*** and ***questions.*** Questions, specifically curiosity questions, demonstrate curiosity and wondering, which can then manifest in students' interest and lead to interest development and greater engagement and allow for real learning to take place. Children and students are puzzling their way through information, attempting (or they should be attempting) to make sense for themselves as well as understand the content. Questions also get at the root of understanding motivation of an action or a person. By asking other's questions, students can get to know someone better, understanding their feelings, and create a community of workers that can work cooperatively together.

I choose Retelling because it is the basis of assessment and was defined as a way that the *students* make explicit their thinking to the teachers. It is the strategy which Summarizing and Determining Importance are built upon. The heart of retelling is active listening in order to convey the information to someone else. A key skill in working together collaboratively and cooperatively is the ability to listen to, evaluate, and incorporate the ideas of others. The foundation for this is the skill of listening.

Connecting directly relates to accessing background knowledge and incorporating new information into one's schema. It is both personal and an entry point for many students, as well as global, connecting to other texts and the world. One's background knowledge and personal experiences can serve as an entry point to empathy. Connecting is a way to begin perspective taking. Kohn's research indicated that people are more likely to be kinder to those who are similar, and if a child is able to see from another's perspective, they gain the ability to find commonalities amongst different types of people.

These strategies allow one to guide comprehension and build a community of children who learn to identify what is really said, make connections to their own experiences, recognize differences between their experiences and the experiences of others, become more engaged readers by questioning the authors, questioning their own experiences, and – respectfully – questioning their peers.

However, as emphasized earlier and in the research, reading comprehension skills are not taught as an end in and of themselves but in service of thinking and understanding of the characters, stories and texts. The work of Kevin Henkes was

specifically considered for this author study. His work is highly relatable to first graders, dealing with developmentally appropriate characters of primary-school age, dealing with issues and feelings about schools, siblings, and making friends. Children are able to connect to the experiences of these characters and hear models that relate and reinforce their personal prosocial behaviors and/or be made aware of the behaviors they should practice.

Reading Strategy: Questioning

In this section, I am focusing on teaching the Comprehension Strategy of Questioning. The skills and strategies needed to be able to use *questioning* to better comprehend are (a) learning what question words are – who, what, where, when, why, how – and how to use them; (b) asking questions of the text before, during, and after reading; and (c) asking questions of the author. Each section is split into four different lessons, highlighting the teaching strategies of modeling, interaction/conversation (talk), writing/drawing response, and incorporating drama.

Some lessons include a specific section on how to differentiate for students with specific strengths and needs. However, all lessons were designed to support as many students as possible with visual (both pictorial and textual) cues and allow for teacher and group modeling, the benefits of using the frame work of an author study with multiple read-alouds and text familiarity.

The Common Core Standards and focused on in the following lessons are:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.8 With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to

answer a question.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *grade 1 topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

> CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1b Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.
>
> CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1c Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.3 Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.6 Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.6 Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using frequently occurring conjunctions to signal simple relationships (e.g., *because*).

A) What are Questions? – Practicing Using Question Words

1. Lesson 1: Concrete Share (Talk)
2. Lesson 2: Question Purse (Model)
3. Lesson 3: A Letter to Character (Response)
4. Lesson 4: Acting it Out (Drama)

Lesson 1: Concrete Share

Goal:

- Children will demonstrate their understanding of story telling by sharing an object that is important to them, listening to others, and asking questions.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is for students to orally convey a story and the importance of an object they bring in. It is important for each student to have something tangible and concrete to talk about that has meaning for him or her. As noted in the literature review, teachers need to explicitly teach how children can "communicate their ideas with clarity and purpose" (Lapp, et al., 2005, p. 202), Research indicates that this is achieved through multiple exposures of modeled thinking language at every opportunity. Teachers help restate and reshape

children's contributions to class discussions to expand thinking and clarify confusions (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Oliver & Zimmerma, 2009). Moreover, Lapp et al (2005) encourage basing these examples in the students' experiences, words, and texts.

By using the prompts of remembering to include the question words, students both gain practice in how to use that specific vocabulary and that there are questions embedded in the stories we tell and the stories that we listen to.

Moreover, this is an opportunity to practice active listening. When students have to share out what others brought, they will key into focusing on answering the questions. The question words can serve as an anchor for what to specifically listen to, so the share out will be in essence, answering those questions. Additionally, the teacher will be there to encourage students to ask their partners if they forgot something (or weren't listening), and in the larger share out, students can have (and ask more) questions than just the prompting ones.

Materials:

- Each child (and teacher) has an object that is important to them
- Extra objects (just in case)
- Written on the board or clearly visible in the classroom to be referred to: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
- Cards with Question Words for each child to have a personal reference

Anticipatory Set:

- As students sit all together, teacher reviews what the 5 W's are. Teacher may ask students simply, which types of words do they use when they want to ask a question. As the students talk, teacher records the Question Words (who, what, where, when, why, how) on the board. The question mark may also be emphasized. As a hint or a noticing, the teacher may point out that all of these words – except how – have they "wh" diagraph.
- Teacher brings in an object with the students sit in a circle in the carpet. She tells the students that she is going to share about the object. However, this is a special share in which she will tell **what** the object is, **who** gave her the object (or a similar **who** that can be associated), **where** it is from, **when** she got it, **why** it is important, and **how** it made her feel. She will also tell the students to listen carefully, because after she shares she will ask the students who can help answer the questions from what she said. As she says this, she should point out the words on the board.

Development:

- After the share and recall, the teacher explains that each student will be given a partner and will share his or her own special object by answering the questions to be the story. It is important for the partner to really listen because the partner will present the object to another group. ("For example, if Rachel were my partner and I shared about my Teddy Bear, Rachel would tell another group about *my* Teddy Bear").

- Each student-pair should find a place in the classroom to share their objects. Teacher should be circulating and listening to what they are saying, asking, questions to the students such as, **who** gave Johnny that truck? **Why** was it important? Students should be given Question Word Cards, so that each individual or pair has a personal referent along with the visual on the board.
- After each partner has shared with each other, students should be put together in groups of four. Each person will get a chance to share her partner's object. If the partner forgets, the teacher should be encouraging the partners to ask for help from her partner (i.e. clarifying questions).

Closing:

- When the students are finished, or enough time has gone by, the students all gather together again in a circle, and a volunteer pair is asked (or pre-selected and asked before gathering all together). After the partner shares her friend's object, the teacher can introduce a new part of the activity - allowing for questions from the group, so that the person's whose object was shared can answer. The teacher can model this. For example. "Oh Louisa, you got that book in Mexico. **How** long where you there? **Who** reads the story to you?" The teacher can stress that along with answering these basic questions, and asking questions when you are confused or forget, an important part of questioning is you curiosity to learn more. Teacher should then allow for 2-3 more questions from the group (as time would allow) and

encourage students to ask each other things about their objects during another free time during school (lunch, snack, choice, etc.)

Assessment:

- *Informal Observations*: During this activity, the teacher is circulating and acting as a listener and facilitator. She can note how the students talk about the objects. Do they use the prompts and systematically answer each question, sometimes stating the question first? Is it more of a natural narrative? Do they answer all of the questions when sharing? Did they bring in an object? For listening, where they able to remember? Did they ask for help? Where they flexible to the suggestion of asking their partners? Where they able to share about their partner's object? Did they choose to ask questions during the whole group discussion? Where the questions on task?

Lesson 2: Question Purse

Goal:

- Students will demonstrate their understanding of using question words by answering questions of a known text, *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse,* through writing, drawing or collaging.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to connect what the children did previously orally with a concrete item that is meaningful to them, with an object that is

meaningful to a character within a text of an author study. After reviewing the questions and emphasizing the question words, the students will answer them in a creative manner, reflecting on the answers and their visual representation.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin (1996). *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*. Greenwillow Books: New York.
- Multiple photocopies of the illustrations in the story for students to use to college
- Scissors, glue, markers, and pencils
- Purse Worksheet

Anticipatory Set:

- Teacher begins the lesson by making an explicit connection to the classes sharing in the previous lesson, to what they will be doing today. "Just like you all shared something very special yesterday, today we are going to read a story about Lily, a character who brought something very special to school, just like you. As we read, we are going to imagine if we were Lily's partners and going to share how the object is important to her, thinking back and using our Question Words. What were those words again we want to use if we are thinking about asking questions?"
- Read part of the *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*

Development:

- After finishing part that goes over about her purse, stop and as a whole group, see if you can answer questions: **what** is the object? (And **what** is inside?) **Who** does it belong to? **Where** does she take it? **When** does she want to share it? **Why** does she get in trouble? **How** does Lilly feel? **How** does the teacher feel? This list is a suggestion; also see if the students can come up with any other questions they might answer using those words. Teacher charts the questions and answers to serve as a reference
- Introduce sheet: After brainstorming answers as a whole group, teacher should show students the Purse Worksheet, and tell the students that they will fill it out independently. They can answer the questions about Lilly's purse either the one's they just brainstormed or other one's they may have come up with. There is a section for each question. The way to answer the question is the student's choice: drawing a picture, writing words, cutting out and gluing images from the story that were photocopied and available, or a combination of all of the above.
- After a certain amount of time, the students will have to stop where they are (hopefully enough time allotted for majority of the students to finish), the students will share their purses with a partner, explaining their choices. Partners will be prompted to ask, "**Why** did you choose this?" Partnerships can be made as students finish at different times as well.

Differentiation:

- The choice in this lesson is intended to provide some self-selected differentiation. Students can chose to write, draw or college.
- If needed, a teacher can take a small group and fill out the first section of the purse together, explicitly using the whole-group chart and drawing a picture to model.

Closing:

- Students gather together. A volunteer (or two) can be asked for (picked ahead of time or randomly) to share their purse, emphasizing which questions they were answer and *why* they the images or words that they did.
- Students should be assured that time will be given during a choice or Quiet Time to finish purse if so desired.

Assessment:

- *Informal Observations*: As students are creating their art, teacher should be circulating, listening to the conversations, asking them what question are they answer and why they are making those specific choices. Teacher may also keep track of who needs extra help in initiating, and how much time they take on different aspects (Is it avoidance? Are they perfectionists?)
- *Product*: The product of the purse gives the teacher an idea of the understanding the student has on how to demonstrate what they know by which option they chose (writing, drawing, collaging) and, more importantly, how they justified their choices. The purses should then be displayed after

used for evaluative purposes: these are something that students should be proud of and help display the question words!

Lesson 3: A Letter to A Character

Goal:

- Students will demonstrate understanding of question words (who, what, where, when, why, how) and how to ask questions by writing a letter to a character from *Chester's Way* composed of questions to a character.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to have students begin to move away from simply answering questions to thinking about asking questions, beyond just those for clarification. While they have hopefully practiced asking each other questions, it is time to start directing those questions to some of the characters in the author study texts. This is an entry point for creative, curious questions because there are no wrong answers or questions in this creative exercise. More over, it is a way to begin to see *what* kind of questions other students may be thinking about as they listen and think about a character. The point is to get students to begin to think about questioning a text and a character –perhaps even think about what those answers could be (i.e. laying the foundations for predictions).

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin (1991). *Chester's Way*. Scholastics: New York.

- Paper, pencil

Anticipatory Set:

- Read aloud *Chester's Way*. As teacher does this, she should conduct "think-alouds" about the characters. For example, when describing Lilly, "Hmm… I wonder why she carries a squirt gun?"

Development:

- Introduce Activity: "Today we are going to write a letter to one of the characters in *Chester's Way*. As I was reading, I had a lot of questions that I wanted to ask the characters. A letter is one place where you can ask questions to someone, and then they respond to it. Has anyone ever gotten a letter in the mail before?"
    - After a discussion of letters, maybe bring in an example, review the parts of a letter. Students should be familiar with this format, as throughout the year they have been writing letters whole group together for "Thank-You" notes to lots of people in the community and parents (for field trips, coming in, etc.), as well as have read *Click-Clack-Moo* and *Dear Mr. LaRue*.
- Interactive Writing Letter: As a class, the teacher work with the class to create a letter to Lilly (*This would serve as a base lesson for a follow-up where the students would then write, independently, a letter to Chester or Wilson using their class' interactive letter as a model).

- For Example: “Dear Lilly,

  Hi. We are class 512, and we love hearing your stories. We were happy that you, Chester, and Wilson became friends in the end. We were wondering, **what** was it like to move to a new place? **Where** did you come from? **Who** were some of your friends from your old school? **Why** do you always have a squirt gun and a costume? **How** did it feel when you first got there?

  We hope to hear from you soon!

  From,

  Class 512”

***Differentiation*:**

- Before writing the letter, a small group may need to brainstorm questions about a character together. The text should made available to do a picture walk, starting with what do they know about the character, to then move to what they want to know.

Closing:

- As students finish the letter, they can read it all together in a choral reading, as well as having different students practice reading it independently to the class. Teacher can have students highlight or go over the question words in a different color, and have other students write them up on the side of the board for extra emphasis.

- Teacher can lead students in a brief discussion about the letter. What did they notice about the letter? What other questions could they ask or want to know about.

Assessment:

- *Informal Observations*: Teacher should be observing who is coming up with questions and the types of questions the students ask. Who is willing to come up and write. Are they spelling the question words correctly? Are they able to identify the question words? Are their questions relevant to the story and the character?

Lesson 4: Acting it Out

Goal:

- Students will demonstrate understanding of using questions to understand characters' feelings by role-playing the ending of *Chester's Way*.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to incorporate movement and role-play to gain a deeper understanding of the characters and ending in *Chester's Way*. The ending of this particular Henke's text is open, leaving students with questions about whether or not the characters become friends with the new mouse in town. By trying to answer that question, students have to understand the story and what happened with Lilly, and if they would become friends or not.

Moreover, students at this age need to move around and be active (See Appendix A- Developmental Chart with Literacy Instruction Implications). By role-playing and acting out the parts to include everyone in the class, it further emphasizes the comprehension strategy of Questioning physically, as well as touching on themes of friendship and inclusion.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin (1991). *Chester's Way*. Scholastics: New York.
- Reference to some of the questions students asked in their letters in previous lesson – perhaps a visual chart, or materials to make a chart (chart paper, markers, or Smart board Notebook File and Smart board)

Anticipatory Set:

- Teacher should have the students all gather together and go over some of the questions that the students wrote in their letters as a way to both review the previous lesson as well as review the story. One possible common question could be whether or not they all became friends at the end of the story. If that was not mentioned commonly, the teacher may highlight if someone did ask it, or model it as a question that she herself had and would want to know about.

Development:

- "Today we are going to explore this question about the ending of *Chester's Way*. I know that I myself and many of you were wondering if they became friends with Victor at the end? Did Henkes tell us what happened? Let's explore to see if we can think about and come up with a prediction of what is possible. Just like with our questions to the characters, there is no right answer, but let's see if we can use what we know about the story and characters to predict how it could have possibly ended."
    - Note: Although this seems like this is mostly about predicting, it is important to use the language of the upcoming strategies, as the strategy use is interrelated. This is a segue into thinking about *why* questions are important to help get at understanding characters, plot, and making predictions. This will be addressed explicitly to the students in the closing.
- Activity: Students will make a large circle, with the teacher in the middle. The teacher will be in the center and ask one student in the center at pretend that they are best friends. A second student will be picked to ask to play. At first the two in the middle will whisper and pretend not to allow him to play. But then, of course, he can join. Then another student is called on to ask to play. The three at first say no and whisper, but then allow the other to join. This continues until everyone has a chance to both feel left out and excluded. This is to simulate how Chester and Wilson were in the beginning and then accepted Lilly.

- After the activity the students will be put into either partnerships and discuss how they felt during the activity. What were they thinking? How do you think Chester, Wilson, and Lilly felt? As students are discussing, teacher is circulating and listening in on responses.

Closing:

- Students will be brought back together to engage in a whole group discussion. Students can share what they're thinking that they shared with their partners. Teacher can pick a volunteer ahead of time to share the response.
- Teacher can reread the last two pages of the story, and repeat the wondering question about the end of the story. When students respond, teacher can now stress, *why* do you think that, and can prompt them to use their experience in the activity.
- Teacher can stress the importance of asking questions to begin to think about exploring how the characters might and what they might do, even after the story is over. She can explicitly say this is higher-level thinking and will eventually talk about making predictions and even inferences, complimenting them on all of their hard work!

Assessment:

- *Informal Observations:* During the dramatic activity, the teacher should note how the students follow directions and catch on to the game. Moreover, she

should listen to their responses both with their partners and whole group if they use that activity to reason and justify their answers about how the characters are feeling based on how they felt during the activity and how that impacted the end of the story.

B) Good Readers Ask Questions of the Text: Before/During/After Reading

Lesson 1: *Wemberly Worried* Part 1 (Model)

Lesson 2: *Wemberly Worried* Part 2 (Talk)

Lesson 3: Post-It (Response)

Lesson 4: Hot Seat (Drama)

Lesson 1: Wemberly Worried Part 1 (Model)

Goal:

- Children demonstrate understanding of asking questions before during and after a text by listening to a new text in the author study and model how readers ask questions at various points in a text.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is for students to begin to think about *what* the purpose of questioning a text is and *when* they should do it. Children should be explicitly taught that they should be questioning the text all the time (i.e.

before/during/after reading) and that this is to stay focused and engaged and thinking about the story during those times. Furthermore, students should notice that their questions and wonderings can change as the story progresses, and that an important part of questioning and thinking is the ability to be flexible with that thinking; therefore going back and reflecting on the questions is equally important. While part of the engagement comes from reading and listening to find the answers to the questions, along with being taught places in which they can find answers, sometimes they will not have an explicit answer and their own reasoning is justified, along with someone else's perhaps varying opinion.

This is just one starting point in for this higher-level cognitive thinking. Students at this age need multiple exposures and different entry points and *lots* of guided practice with this level of thinking. This should occur throughout the year and in later years to come. I believe that this is important enough to include in this four-level section about Questioning over the course of three levels to simulate a gradual release of responsibility: *Lesson 1* is a mainly a teacher model; *Lesson 2* is more interactive and cooperative; while *Lesson 3* there is more independent practice.

This is an introduction to a way of thinking that should be continued. It further serves as the foundation for predictions, inferring, and deeper character/feeling work throughout their primary educational career.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin (2001). *Wemberly Worried*. Scholastics: New York.

- 3 columned chart paper with headings of Before, During, and After. Chart should also include the title: *Wemberly Worried*

Anticipatory Set:

- Teacher should begin by introducing the idea that "Good readers ask questions before, during, and after they read a story." She should connect with the fact that they already do this, when they look at the cover and title of a book, good readers are already asking themselves **what** the story could be about, **who** might be in the story, and **where** the story may take place.

Development:

- The teacher should then show the chart, asking the students what they think they might use something like this for. Teacher should explain that over the next few lessons they will use this chart to help organize their thinking as they read some books by Kevin Henkes. She should tell the students that, "Today, I am going to begin to read a story called *Wemberly Worried*. As I read, and even before I begin to read, I want you to watch and notice what questions and wonderings that I have. I will keep track of my thinking on this chart here. When I stop, I want you to tell me what you notice, but for now, it is your job to be really good active listeners to watch *how* I am thinking."
- Teacher may allow for some time to ask the students if they have any questions of her, but then she should begin to read *Wemberly Worried*,

stopping to write questions on the chart paper and think aloud. For example, before starting, she can look at the title and cover and in the "Before" column write: **Who** is Wemberly? **Why** is she worried?

- Teacher should stop about half-way through, after page: "Soon, Wemberly had a new worry: school. Wemberly worried about the start of school more than anything she had ever worried about before."

Closing:

- Teacher should assure the students that she will continue to finish the book later, but for now they are going to look at the questions and discuss what they noticed. The teacher should first open up to the students to see what they noticed either about what the story or the questions that she had.
- Teacher may guide students into looking directly at the questions on the paper. They should go through if, thus far, what questions have been answered and what questions remain.
- Teacher can end by asking students if they have any lingering questions and any guesses or predictions ***based on their lingering questions*** about what might happen on next.

Assessment:

- *Informal Observation*: Since this is more of an introduction lesson, heavily teacher scaffolded, the assessment comes in later on how they apply some of these questions and lessons in the later lessons. However, a teacher is

always watching level of engagement during a read aloud, the types of questions during the group discussion, and the predictions students make at the end.

Lesson 2: Wemberly Worried Part 2 (Talk)

Goal:

- Students demonstrate understanding of questioning strategy by asking questions before/during/after a read aloud of *Wemberly Worried* .

Rationale:

See Lesson 1: Wemberly Worried Part 1

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin (2001). *Wemberly Worried*. Scholastics: New York.
- Chart from previous lesson with teacher questions written in, but enough room to add on. 3rd column should be complete empty: 3 columned chart paper with headings of Before, During, and After. Chart should also include the title: *Wemberly Worried.*

Anticipatory Set:

- Teacher should ask the students what they did the previous lesson and what the story was about so far.

    - This should be done without the visual of the chart, just to get students thinking first. Also, the retelling/summary of the story to this point would be a good quick assessment of where some students are in terms of retelling/summarizing without the explicit instruction thus far. Teacher should be discerning on whom they call on to set a good example for their peers and not to confuse others. The point is not to put a student on the spot, but rather have peers remember and share what they remember about the previous lesson and story.
- After the quick review/assessment, the teacher can use the chart to go over the questions from the previous lesson, which questions were answered, and what the answers were.

Development:

- "Today, we are going to finish reading *Wemberly Worried*. However, this time, instead of me asking all of the questions, it's your turn. As I read, I am going to stop and ask if anyone has any questions or would like to share her thinking. I will write it up on the chart to go over at the end. Also, another thing to keep in the back of your mind, as I am reading and you are thinking of questions, we are going to do some thinking about *why* we are asking these questions at the end."
- Teacher should then begin reading a page before where she stopped previously: "'you worry too much,' said her mother.'…" At different times,

teacher should stop and ask if anyone has any questions. If the students need more examples, teacher should model a wondering at that time.

Closing:

- After both book and chart are completed, class should go over the questions, what were some of the answers, and were there questions left over? Especially by having questions at the end, how do you find the answers? Class should brainstorm about how to answer questions, and teacher, in the end can stress that sometimes (a) you might not find out the answer, but a really good place to start is (b) that good readers read texts many times and can learn different things each time.
- Teacher should leave students thinking: Why is it important to ask question of the text? As a quick check in, each student should share one thing (even if it is a repetition or restatement of someone else's thought) about why it is important to ask questions. Teacher should stress that there is no one or right answer to this question.

Assessment:

- *Informal Observations*: Teacher observes level of engagement during a read aloud, the types of questions during the group discussion, the review in the beginning as well as at the end if any of the questions are answered, and the brainstorm about how to answer questions.

- *Systematic Observation*: Since as an almost exit-ticket each student has to answer why it is important to ask questions, this is a high-level thinking synthesis question that would be great quick assessment to check understanding of the meta-level.

Lesson 3: Post-It (Response)

Goal:

- Students will demonstrate understanding of asking questions before, during and after a text by writing a question on post-its during a read aloud of *A Weekend with Wendell* Students.

Rationale:

See Lesson 1: Wemberly Worried Part 1

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin (1986). *A Weekend with Wendell.* Greenwillow Books: New York.
- 3 columned chart paper with headings of Before, During, and After. Chart should also include the title: A *Weekend with Wendell*
- Enough 3 different colored post-its, enough for each student to 1 of each color, along with some extras
- Pencils

Anticipatory Set:

- The charts for *Wemberly Worried* should be displayed prominently. Teacher should compliment students on their hard work thinking together and asking questions about *Wemberly Worried* before, during, and after the listening to the text.

Development:

- "Today, you will each get a chance to practice by yourselves asking questions as I read. I will give you each 3 post-its. You might notice they are three different colors. This is for the three columns in our chart." Teacher should show the blank chart for *A Weekend With Wendell* and the color-coded key for which post-it for what column. These should be visible as the teacher reads aloud.
- Teacher reads *A Weekend With Wendell*. Before starting, she models how she takes her before-colored post-it and writes something and leaves it by her side. The teacher tells the student they can write the question during-colored post-it at any time listening to the story, but she will pause at a some point to suggest if they have not already written a question, now would be a good time. She will also leave time at the end for them to write their after-colored post-it.
- When the story is completed and the students are given enough time to finish writing their post-its, the teacher will call a few students up at a time to stick their post-its in the appropriate columns. Once all the post-its are in place,

the teacher can give some time for students to look at the completed chart and gather on the rug.

***Differentiation*:**

- One way to support students is to preview the text before the lesson begins. Additionally, students should be given the option of drawing a picture or a word or two instead of a full question on the post-it.
- The activity can be simplified by having a few students just be responsible for asking a question in the beginning, middle, or end, but not all three. Then, those children just responsible for one question can be grouped together so within the group, all parts are covered and the students are working together.

Closing:

- Teacher reads the post-its aloud to the students. She asks them what they notice about the questions: were there any repetitive questions? What does that tell us about a readers thinking?
    - Later, the teacher may make a chart, like with *Wemberly Worried* using the students' questions to clearly display their thinking, along with a tally or number of times a question was asked. This can be used in a follow up to re-enforce either plot, asking and answering questions, or review *A Weekend With Wendell*.

Assessment:

- *Product*: The post-its produced can be used as an assessment tool. Teacher should pay attention to the mechanics, and most importantly the questions they have written down. Do students use question marks? Did they properly use question words? Are their questions on point, related to the story and different parts? What were the questions about?

Lesson 4: Hot Seat (Drama)

Goal:

- Children will demonstrate understanding of questioning before, during, and after a text by asking questions of a peer acting as a character in a familiar text at various points of a story (before, during, after). Questions should reflect an incorporation of a student's knowledge from the text, her previous work with questioning, and background knowledge to ask and answer questions.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to combine asking questions of characters and text through active participation and drama. The teacher will use a familiar text, A *Weekend with Wendell,* which the students have already put in some cognitive work with in order to get into the role of either answering questions of the characters or asking deeper questions through an activity called "Hot Seat." Tompkins defines Hot Seat as "a role-playing activity that builds students' comprehension. Students

assume the persona of a character from a story" (Tompkins, 2010,p. 438). Students can expand their thinking and questioning through this activity, with the scaffold of the previous lessons to guide them and the concrete chart as a visible reminder. The actors and the questioners get to actively participate and demonstrate what they have learned and understood.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin (1986). A *Weekend with Wendell.* Greenwillow Books: New York.
- Teacher version of *A Weekend With Wendell* Before, During, and After Questioning chart
- One chair in the center of a circle

Anticipatory Set:

- The teacher should review the post-it chart from the previous lesson and show the clarified, "teacher" version (where questions are written clearly and largely for reference, but taken directly from students' question and language). Together, questions can be reviewed.
- Reviewing the questions of *A Weekend With Wendell* will segue into reviewing the story, by answering noting whether questions were answered or not and what those answers were, students should naturally touch upon the general plot and characters of the story. Teacher should write up the character's names on the board, near the chart.

Development:

- "As we've learned, good readers read stories more than once, often finding hidden answers, and questions as they re-read. Today, we are going to re-read *A Weekend With Wendell*. This time, though as I read, we are going to take turns being the characters, one at a time, in the story. When you are a character, you sit in this chair, in the middle of the circle. When I stop reading, your peers can question you, the character in the middle. It is your job to answer as if you were that character. For example, good readers start asking questions before reading, right? So I am going to go into the center of the circle and sit down and be Wendell. Does anyone have any questions for me before I start reading?" The teacher then can model answering questions, pretending to be Wendell. The teacher can also explicitly tell students if they are stuck for ideas for questions, they all worked so hard previously and can refer to the chart that they made together, but they can think of new questions as they are listening. A good place to start with this book, for all of the characters, is "**How** are you *feeling*?"
- Teacher should re-read story, stopping every few pages to have a student be a character in the center. At each pause, depending on level of engagement, teacher should have about 3 questions person in the middle, and can have more than one character's perspective, depending on the part (generally Sophie and Wendell). Since the students are familiar with the text, the stopping and starting should not get in the way of the general plot

understanding, and it creates a different listening, active participation experience.

Closing:

- After the story is over, and after-text questions have been asked and answered by various actors, students should reflect on the experience. The teacher should ask students what it was like to answer questions as if they were the characters? Was it easier or harder for them to ask questions of the characters with their friends acting it out? Why or why not? Did this help them better understand the story or the characters? Why or why not?
- After these sets of lessons, I think it is important to stop and ask the students the importance of asking questions to check in with what they have learned. This was briefly touched upon the previous lesson, but now, it should be recorded and expanded upon a little more in depth as a large group discussion, though starting first with a quick Turn-and-Talk with a partner, to make sure that everyone voices something first.

Assessment:

- *Informal Observations*: Teacher observes level of engagement during a read aloud and activity – how did the students respond to asking questions to their peers and how did they respond pretending to be the characters - the types of questions during the group discussion, the review in the beginning as well as at the end if any of the questions are answered, and the brainstorm

about the importance of answer questions. Teacher can record student input on the brainstorm either by directly putting his initials on chart or noting it privately.

C. *Good Readers Ask Questions of the Author*

Lesson 1: Henkes *text* Expert (Talk)

Lesson 2: Henkes as a person (Model)

Lesson 3: Letter/About the Author (Response)

Lesson 4: Henkes Celebration (Drama)

Lesson 1: Henkes text Expert (Talk)

Goal:

- Students demonstrate understanding and expertise of author Kevin Henkes by recalling various titles, characters, and trends of his works, gaining confidence in recognizing the amount of knowledge they collectively have about the stories and work of Kevin Henkes; they are each individual Kevin Henkes story "experts".

Rationale:

As Collins writes, "becoming an expert about something is very powerful and motivating for students and teachers alike. One thing that teachers can do to support children's growing expertise is to notice and help them extend their

thinking" (Collins, 2004, pg. 202). The purpose of this lesson is to begin for students to reflect on how much they do know about the different stories of Kevin Henkes in terms of their similarities and differences and what makes his stories unique. They will begin to move past the his work and be introduced into thinking about him as an author, and, just as they questioned characters previously, they will move to question him.

By knowing an author is a person, students develop a "concept of an author," an awareness that Tompkins writes, "is important so that students will think of them as real people who eat breakfast, ride bikes, and take out the garbage, just as they do. When students think of authors as real people, they view reading in a more personal way" (Tompkins, 2010,p. 335). This helps bridge students understanding that they, too, can become authors.

Along with the importance of the reading and writing connection, I believe that questioning the author sets the foundation for students to learn that they should not just question a text, but the source of that text and question why the author is making certain decisions. While this is more important in older grades and with non-fiction, this is a foundational skill that can begin by starting with an author study and directing the questioning strategy to the source – at this stage, the author.

Materials:

- Photo-copy images of covers of Henkes book read during the course of the year:

- Henkes, Kevin (1986). *A Weekend With Wendell.* Greenwillow Books: New York
- Henkes, Kevin (1991). *Chester's Way*. Scholastics: New York.
- Henkes, Kevin (1991). *Chrysanthemum.* Greenwell Books: New York
- Henkes, Kevin (1990). *Julius The Baby of the World*. Greenwillow Books: New York.
- Henkes, Kevin (1996). *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*. Greenwillow Books: New York.
- Henkes, Kevin (1993). *Owen*. Scholastics: New York.
- Henkes, Kevin (1987). *Sheila Rae, The Brave.* Scholastics: New York.
- Henkes, Kevin (2001). *Wemberly Worried*. Scholastics: New York.

- Chart Paper – titled: "Kevin Henkes Story Traits"
- Chart Paper – titled: "Questions for Kevin Henkes"
- Markers

Anticipatory Set:

- Teacher should introduce the idea that the students are experts at the stories of Kevin Henkes. To do so, have them brainstorm a list of the Kevin Henkes books that they know and the characters in the books together. As students remember stories, teacher should hang up the cover of the books.

Development:

- Since they know so many different stories by the same authors, the teacher should ask, "What are some things that they have noticed that are the same in Kevin Henkes books?" As a group, together make a chart of things that are commonly found in his books or really any common characteristics of the books (examples: characters mostly mice, similar characters throughout the stories, repetitive phrases, little pictures with words above them, themes about friendships, school, etc.) on chart "Kevin Henkes Story Traits"
- Read another Kevin Henkes story, either take a vote on a favorite, or introduce one that they have not heard yet or worked with explicitly (something like *Chrysanthemum* that they heard in the beginning of the year, but not re-read during their author study). Teacher should direct students to give a thumbs up as they are listening if they notice any of the characteristics they listed on the chart.

Closing:

- "You are all experts at the stories of Kevin Henkes. But good readers do not just ask questions of the stories, they ask questions about the authors as well." The teacher should close by asking the students, "If the author were here, do you have any questions you would like to ask him?" The teacher can model questions that she may have and begin a list using what she knows about his texts and then framing them into questions: "I notice that all the books we have read so far have mice, I would want to ask the Kevin Henkes

why he chose to use mice? Another question I have is where do you get your ideas from?"

Assessment:

- *Informal Assessment*: Teacher should be aware of student responses and ability to come up with recalling the different texts, the characters, and coming up with similarities amongst the texts. She should take note on how responded and level of response – literal, inferential, and evaluative. Are some students quiet during group discussions in general and does that mean they do not understand, cannot remember, or simply do not like talking in large groups?
- *Product*: The traits and questions recorded by the teacher that the students pose serve as a form of assessment. However the teacher chooses to record the students ideas, either in a chart or Smartbook file, the teacher should add to it throughout the upcoming lessons, and it should be used as a reference for the students and teacher throughout the unit. This can serve as an anchor chart and concrete visual for their thinking, as well as a way to expand and reflect throughout the unit.

Lesson 2: Henkes as a person (Model)

Goal:

- Students demonstrate their Kevin Henkes expertise by comparing and contrasting his text to notice and record more common characteristics in his works and use that to generate more questions for the author.

Rationale:

- *See Lesson 1: Henkes Text Expert*

Materials:

- Chart Paper – titled: "Kevin Henkes Story Traits"
- Chart Paper – titled: "Questions for Kevin Henkes"
- Markers
- Henkes, Kevin. (1989). *Jessica*. Greenwillow Books: New York.

Anticipatory Set:

- "Yesterday we started listing questions that we would want to know about Kevin Henkes as an author. In reviewing the list, are there any questions you might want to add before we get started?"

Development:

- Introduce *Jessica*: "Today we are going to read a different Kevin Henkes book that we haven't heard before. As you listen, like last time, I want you give a thumbs up if you hear any of our Kevin Henkes story Traits, but also think if there is anything different that we might add after we are done.

- Teacher should then read *Jessica* with minimal stopping.
- After the story is over, teacher should go over the Kevin Henkes story Traits to see which one's were present and if there is anything to add to the chart.

***Differentiation*:**

- Since this is an unfamiliar text, one way to support learners is to preview this text before the lesson, telling students the prompts before lesson to give them familiarity with the text and question, and thus more time to think.

Closing:

- "The story we heard today was a little bit different then the other ones that we have heard previously. You did great work *comparing and contrasting** the works of Kevin Henkes. You are all really experts on his stories. As we review this list, are there any other questions you might want to add?" Bringing out the chart of questions for Henkes, teacher should add any new questions.
    - *As part of the curriculum in social studies, students will be comparing and contrasting different schools, so this can be a good place to start using that vocabulary, and a place to refer back to when that part of the curriculum is taught later in the year to make cross-curricular connections.

Assessment:

- *Informal Observations:* Teacher should be aware of student responses and their ability to come up with recalling the different texts, the characters, and

coming up with similarities amongst the texts. She should take note on who responded and level of response – literal, inferential, and evaluative. Are some students quiet during group discussions in general and does that mean they do not understand, cannot remember, or simply do not like talking in large groups?

- *Product*: The traits and questions that the students pose serve as a form of assessment that will be added on throughout these lessons to serve as an anchor and concrete visual for their thinking, as well as a way to expand and reflect throughout the unit. In this lesson, students should add on to these two charts collaboratively.

Lesson 3: Letter/About the Author (Response)

Goal:

- Children demonstrate understanding of Kevin Henkes as a person by applying non-fiction information on Kevin Henkes from different media sources to a written assignment.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is for students to learn about the author Kevin Henkes, using different non-fiction sources of information. They will then use that information to write either a letter to him or an About the Author writing blurb. Students should be able to express a choice in how they express their understandings, and it is important that they receive information in different

formats – be it books, articles, or video clips. This lesson is a continuation on how students begin to answer the questions they pose to either a text or an author. It also teaches students to have a flexibility of changing their perceptions and a comfort in not always finding an answer.

Materials:

- YouTube Video of interview with Kevin Henkes: www.kevinhenkes.com
- Rhodes, Immacula A. (2002). *Teaching With Favorite Kevin Henkes Books: Creative, Skill-Building Activities for Exploring the Themes in These Popular Books*. Scholastic Professional Books: New York
- High-lighter
- Writing paper
- "About the Author" paper
- Pencils
- Chart Paper – titled: "Kevin Henkes Story Traits"
- Chart Paper – titled: "Questions for Kevin Henkes"

Anticipatory Set:

- Teacher reads section about Kevin Henkes from Rhodes book. Since this would be a photocopy, it can be projected as it is being read aloud, and teacher can highlight important information that answers the students' questions or just fun facts about the author.

- As an additional source of information, the teacher plays the YouTube clip of Kevin Henkes. "Since we could not have Kevin Henkes come to our classroom himself, we will watch a short clip of him to learn more about him."

Development:

- Academic Choice: (1): Just like writing to a character in Chester's Way, students can choose to write a letter to Kevin Henkes or (2) Since students have experience writing "About the Author" sections for their own pieces previously, they can use the same format and sheet with their newly acquired knowledge about Henkes to write their own "About the Author" on Kevin Henkes.

***Differentiation*:**

- A copy of the text, simplified, can be given to students to as a personal referent. Additionally, a small group can begin to brainstorm together with a teacher and chart what they learned about Kevin Henkes from the different sources.
- Letter writing paper can be made available, and depending on student choice, the teacher can model how to write a letter to Kevin Henkes or begin the About the Author.

Closing:

- As students finish their pieces, they will share with each other. As they are sharing, they should be prompted to think about and notice whether or not they included some of the same questions in their letters or information in their About the Author? Why do they think they did (or did not)?

Assessment:

- *Product*: The letter and About the Author produced can be used as an assessment tool. Teacher should pay attention to the form of the letter, spelling, mechanics, and most importantly the questions they have written down and information they use. Did they incorporate the information they learned in the text and video? How much?

Lesson 4: Share their Expertise (Drama)

Goal:

- Children demonstrate their Kevin Henkes expertise by sharing their favorite text and knowledge about him as a person to cross-grade partners.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to have a fun celebratory, cross-grade share. Working with different peers is important, as well as sharing their new "expertise." As teachers, they also get the advantage of hearing models of questions from different students. Students should be proud of their hard work!

Materials:

- Multiple copies of Kevin Henkes Books:
- Copies of the students work, either their letter or About the Author piece
- Displayed charts: "Kevin Henkes Story Traits" and "Questions for Kevin Henkes"
- Displayed book covers

Anticipatory Set:

- Invite a different grade to come so students may share what they have learned about Kevin Henkes.
- Students will be placed in partners and groups, depending on interest and number of available copies, of their favorite Kevin Henkes books.
- Students should practice explaining what they have done in the classroom thus far with a partner before the different grade partners come: what do the different charts mean? Why did they pick this book? What did they learn about Kevin Henkes? Partners should role-play being a clueless student from a different grade and ask questions they might anticipate hearing (modeled first by the teacher). The teacher should stress again, that they might not know the answers to all of the questions the other students might have, but just to do their best.

Development:

- Depending on the grade (and reading level of student), the student can read the story to their partner, do a picture walk and tell the gist of the story to a younger partner, or have an older partner read the story to them. The point is that there is a shared experience of the text between cross-grade partnerships or groupings.
- Each student can share their information and/or questions about Kevin Henkes to the partners, acting as the teachers to the students of the other grade.
- Students should ask their partners what they liked about the story or if they had any questions about the story or the author. First graders can do their best to answer.

Closing:

- First graders can enjoy sharing the work they did together by showing the classroom charts and displays of the Kevin Henkes stories. They can be the experts at answering questions by the other students. Together, they can share Kevin Henkes themed-snacks (Rhodes, 2000).

Assessment:

- *Informal Observations*: During this celebration, teacher should be circulating and listening in on student shares and conversations. Part of this is also about how students work together, sharing information and

asking/answering questions of each other. Teacher should be listening to the students' responses and explanations of their thinking work.

Reading Strategy: Retelling

In this section, I am focusing on teaching the Comprehension Strategy of Retelling. The skills and strategies needed to be able to use *retelling* to better comprehend are (a) understanding structuring a story by its beginning, middle, and end; (b) sequencing; and (c) understanding the story elements: *who* the characters are, the *where* and *when* of the setting, *what* is the problem, and *how* it is solved. Each section is split into four different lessons, highlighting the teaching strategies of modeling, interaction/conversation (talk), writing/drawing response, and incorporating drama.

Some lessons include a specific section on how to differentiate for students with specific strengths and needs. However, all lessons were designed to support as many students as possible with visual (both pictorial and textual) cues and allow for teacher and group modeling, the benefits of using the frame work of an author study with multiple read-alouds and text familiarity.

The Common Core Standards and focused on in the following lessons are:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.2 Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.3 Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its

characters, setting, or events.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.1.4c Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.3 Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.8 With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *grade 1 topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

> CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1b Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.4 Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.5 Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.6 Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.6 Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using frequently occurring conjunctions to signal simple relationships (e.g., *because*).

A) Beginning/Middle/End

Lesson 1: What happened in the story? (model)

Lesson 2: Organize events in beginning/middle/end: Part 1(talk)

Lesson 3: Organize events: Part 2 (response)

Lesson 4: Story Train (response)

Lesson 1: What happened in the story? (model)

Goal:

- Students will list the events of a familiar text, *Julias The Baby of the World* practicing the sequencing skills from previous lessons.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to explicitly practice listing events in a story in order, to set up for following lesson in categorizing the events into the beginning of

a story, the middle of the story, and the end. Students often recall may details or different events of a story, but they need help structuring their thinking. Therefore, the simplest place to start is to understand and organize their recollections and thinking around beginning, middle, and end. This is the first lesson of two where it is just to practice first the sequencing of events where all answers are accepted and together students practice sequencing again.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin (1990). *Julius The Baby of the World*. Greenwillow Books: New York.
- Chart paper and markers

Anticipatory Set:

- The teacher should begin this by lesson telling a personal anecdote, emphasizing the use of the vocabulary in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end. For example, she can talk about her previous day. "Yesterday, in the beginning of my day, I was rushed to work." Here, she can list different events, such as getting up late, missing the bus etc. She should continue, stressing the new vocabulary. "In the middle of the day, I found out I had a meeting with the principle. I had to eat really fast, set up the room, and cancel a phone call. In the end, I was so exhausted that I went home and went right to bed!"

- The teacher can ask the students to help her retell her day, stressing, what happened in the beginning, the middle, and the end." If there is time, the teacher can tell the students to turn and talk to their partner, what happened to them yesterday. Since this is an introductory lesson, it is just to get the students prepared for story telling and the idea of organizing the stories by beginning/middle/end, and therefore the structure of the oral practice is loose.

Development:

- "Today we are going to re-read the story *Julius The Baby of the World*. This time as you listen, I want you to focus on what is going on in the story and trying to remember what happens in the order that they happen."
- The teacher should read the story aloud, doing a think a loud and emphasizing the different events of the story, inserting sequence words in the think aloud.
- After the story is finished, teacher should ask students to tell her what happened in the story. She should challenge them to use the sequence words that they were practicing. Teacher should accept all answers and chart all responses.

Closing:

- Teacher should go over list, see if there is anything else that they want to add to the list, ask students what they notice about it, and how this helps them

remember the story. The teacher should ask the students if the events are in order, and if there is a discrepancy, the teacher can pair the students to check the correct sequence in the book.

Assessment:

- *Informal Observation*: Since this is more of an introduction lesson, heavily teacher scaffolded, the assessment comes in later on how the students then take this work as a foundation for subsequent lessons. However, this is also a practice from previous lessons, so teacher is noting how the students are able to orally retell a story (or list the events of a known story) together using the sequence words. Moreover, a teacher is always watching level of engagement during a read aloud, the types of questions and answers during the group discussion.

Lesson 2: Organize the events: Part 1 (talk)

Goal:

- Children will deepen their understanding of beginning/middle/end by sorting the events they came up with into the categories of the beginning, middle and end of the story.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is for students to begin to work towards summary and an understanding of time of events in a story, along with the sequence.

Similarly to sequence words, using the structures "Beginning" "Middle" and "End" provide students with a framework to organize their thinking and keep track of text. The goal is to have students apply this to their "just-right" texts, but practice initially together, scaffolded by a familiar read-aloud in their Author Study.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin (1990). *Julius The Baby of the World*. Greenwillow Books: New York.
- Chart from previous lesson listing the events that students brainstormed from *Julius The Baby of the World*
- 3 sentence strips:
    - "In the **beginning**, Lilly was excited for her baby brother."
    - "In the **middle,** Lilly was mean to her baby brother."
    - "In the **end**, Lilly stuck up for her baby brother and loved him."

Anticipatory Set:

- "Today we are going to look at the hard work that you all did yesterday and organize it in a new way." The teacher and class can go over and read together the list of events that they came up in the previous lesson.

Development:

- After going over the events, the teacher will introduce the concept of Beginning/Middle/End. "Sometimes when we are retelling someone about

something we read, we do not want to tell them *everything that has happened*, like we listed here, because we do not want to give away all of the events. But one way that helps us keep those ideas in order and remember the most important part is to think about what happens in the **beginning**, what happens in the **middle,** and what happens in the **end."** Teacher should then show the sentence strips and read them to the class. She should ask if these sentences make sense in talking about *Julius The Baby of the World*.

- After the sentence strips are introduced, teacher should refer back to the chart that they made together. She can then both color code and cut up the students' listed events and have students place them under each of the sentence strips in their proper place, soliciting the students help on where to put each event. This is to demonstrate that there can be many events that show that "In the **beginning**, Lilly was excited for her baby brother" but they all can be sorted under that heading.

Closing:

- After each of the events is sequenced, students and teacher should go over the new sort. The teacher should ask the students if there are any changes they would like to make or anything that they notice.
- Teacher should also have the students reflect on why they did the activity. She can ask, "What helped you do this?" or "How did you go about doing this?"

Assessment:

- *Informal Observation*: Teacher should be monitoring who participates and how. Can they help each other retell the story? Are they able to sort the events under the different modeled sentences. What are their responses to the discussion questions?

Lesson 3: Organize the events: Part 2 (talk/response)

Goal:

- Students will demonstrate understanding of beginning/middle/end by using these phrases "In the beginning…" "In the middle…"and "In the end…" to retell *Chrysanthemum,* working collaboratively with a partner.

Rationale:

The purpose of the this lesson is to begin to remove the intermediary step of listing all of the events that took place and then sorting them into beginning/middle/end to moving directly into thinking the key events, *what's most important,* to what happened in each three sections. This is a beginning level, developmentally appropriate way to approach the higher level thinking strategy that involves determining importance and thus was broken into different parts with the different scaffolds. The Story Train (Lesson 4) is another way of pictorially representing and organizing the different parts of the story.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin (1991). *Chrysanthemum.* Greenwell Books: New York
- Chart paper, markers
- Sentence Strips with starters "In the **beginning**, Chrysanthemum…", "In the **middle**, Chrysanthemum…" and "In the **end**, Chrysanthemum…" for each pair or group.

Anticipatory Set:

- "Just like yesterday when we thought about *Julius The Baby of the World* in terms of what happened in the **beginning, middle** and **end**, today, as I read *Chrysanthemum* I want you to think about how you can tell a partner what happened in the story in those three parts. Unlike with *Julius*, we are not going to start by listing *all* of the events first, but really think about what is the most important parts to describe what happened in the story."

Development:

- The teacher can begin by reading aloud *Chrysanthemum*. As she reads, she should emphasize both the events of the story and stressing the words: **beginning, middle,** and **end.**
- During the story the teacher can pause in the **beginning** (where Chrysanthemum likes her name) in the **middle** (when everyone is teasing her and she is upset) and in the **end** (when the teacher reveals her name is a flower and everyone wants a flower name) asking the students to turn and talk to a partner and review what has happened so far.

- When the story is finished, the teacher should introduce the activity: "Now that we have heard the story *Chrysanthemum* and you have been thinking about what has happened in the story, I am going to break you up into groups (or pairs depending on the class' strengths and needs) and you are going to fill in these strips." Teacher should show the students the model from *Julius The Baby of the World* and remind them how they used their knowledge of the events of the story to come up with just three sentences, using the sentence starters to tell the story.

Closing:

- Students should come together and share the work that they did. After each group shared, students should note, what did they notice about the class' work. Did they come up with the same things for each of the different sentences? What was similar? What was different? As a class, with the teacher help, they can combine their work and come up with the model for *Chrysanthemum* (for example):
    - In the **beginning**, Chrysanthemum loved her name and was excited for school.
    - In the **middle**, Chrysanthemum hated her name and did not like school.
    - In the **end**, everyone loved Chrysanthemum's name and wanted a flower name too!

Assessment:

- *Informal Observation*: Teacher should be monitoring who participates and how. Can they help each other retell the story? Are they able to summarize the story together and fill in the sentences on the strips. What are their responses to the discussion questions?

Lesson 4: Story Train (response)

Goal:

- Students will demonstrate understanding of beginning/middle/end by completing a graphic organizer (Story Train) by showing text structure to pictorial (and optionally with words) represent the beginning, middle, and end of *Julius' Candy Corn.*

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to provide a concrete graphic organizer to help students organize and apply the concept of Beginning/Middle/End. It is important when learning this difficult concept to represent it in different ways to see which children respond to and understand the different formats and give students multiple entry points while still working towards the same goal: organizing and thinking about a story in terms of its beginning, middle, and end.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin (2003). *Julius' Candy Corn.* Greenwillow Books: NY.
- Story Train Sheet – differentiated one with lines and one without

Anticipatory Set:

- "Today we are going to continue our work on Beginning/Middle/ and End, but this time, instead of doing it all together, we are going to do it a little bit differently. Instead of *writing* what happens in each part of a story, you are going to draw the different parts using this Story Train."
- Using the sentence strips, teacher should model how to fill out the story train, transferring the ideas from Chrysanthemum into pictures. She should show the different choices of the story train as well, but at this point it would be the student's academic choice.

Development:

- The teacher then should introduce the activity. "Today, I am going read *Julius' Candy Corn.* When I am finished, it is your job to fill out this sheet, just like I modeled here with *Chrysanthemum*, really thinking about what happened in the **beginning**, **middle,** and the **end**. The train is small, so you can't include *all* of the details, but just like the sentences, we created for *Chrysanthemum* and *Julius The Baby of the World* you can do your best to get the most important part."
- Once the story is finished, the students should return to their seats to independently fill out the Story Elements House. As students work, teacher should circulate making observations.

Closing:

- Students should gather again. At this point, the teacher should ask for reflection on *why* this is important by engaging in a class discussion explicitly asking, the students *why* they think this is important? *How* is this helpful? The goal is to have students understand that this is one way to help organize one's thinking while reading and give purpose to some questions a child might ask of a text and remember to be able to talk about a story with someone who has not read it before or may think differently about it.

Assessment:

- *Product*: The worksheet produced can be used as an assessment tool. Were the students able to draw pictures in each car of the train? Did their sequencing make sense? Were they able to explain what they drew and why they drew it? If they chose to write a sentence, did they spell **beginning, middle**, and **end** correctly? Who chose to challenge themselves?

B) Sequencing

Lesson 1: Modeling and Introducing Sequence Words (Model)

Lesson 2: Practice Using Sequence Words Together (Talk)

Lesson 3: Sequencing Picture Sort (Response)

Lesson 4: Tell the Story Together (Drama)

Lesson 1: Modeling and Introducing Sequence Words (Model)

Goal:

- Children will demonstrate their understanding of sequence by using sequence words (first, then, next, after that, and finally) as a way to structure a retelling of a story.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to expand upon chldren's knowledge and work with beginning, middle, and end by giving them more specific vocabulary of first, then, next, after that, and finally, as a way to further structure their retelling. These words are important to give students a concrete way of organizing their thoughts and their oral as well as written words. The text, *Lilly's Chocolate Heart*, was picked because it has a clear set of events with a good visual object represented with each action.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin. (2004). *Lilly's Chocolate Heart.* Greenwillow Books: NY.
- Pocket chart
- *Sequence Words*: on individual sentence strips, in the same color, Sequence Words: First, Then (multiple copies), Next, After that, Finally
- Object Words: For this story, on individual sentence strips with the words and picture of the object in a different color: bed, dresser, radiator, picture frame, book shelf, mouth

Anticipatory Set:

- Introduce book and Sequence Words: "Today I am going to read you a new book by our author, Kevin Henkes: *Lilly's Chocolate Heart.* As I read I am going to think about how I am going to help retell the story to my sister, who has never heard this story before. One way that helps me remember is to think about on the order that things happen in the story. These are my special words that will help me keep things in order, in *sequence*."
- Teacher then can show and go over each of the sequence word by reading the word aloud, having the stories repeat, and then putting it, in order in the pocket chart.

Development:

- Read Aloud: The teacher should read through the story, putting emphasis on each place that Lilly tries to hide the candy.
- Think Aloud: "Hmm…, so now I know this story is about Lilly who is looking for a place to put her chocolate. I know she thinks about hiding it in bed, dresser, radiator, picture frame, book shelf, mouth." As the teacher says each object, in any order, placing them in the pocket chart.
- "So now that I want to tell my sister the story, I am going to see if I can use my *sequence* words to help me practice the story before I tell her." Then the teacher can model aloud how she would do it. "First, Lilly looked under her bed" (and she would move the object "bed" to be in the same line as first with

a little space in between to indicate that it is not a complete sentence. She should continue this with all of the words and objects are matched up.

***Differentiation*:**

- As the teacher models, she should use all five of the sequence words, however, some students should be given the option to use simply First, Then, Last. It would benefit all students to make the explicit connection between First, Then, Last and beginning/middle/ and end.

Closing:

- Checking Our Work: "Now that I've done it, I want to double check that I got them in the right order. I'm going to re-read the story to all of you, and I need your help. Give me a thumbs up if it is correct after each one." Teacher should then re-read the story.
- Emphasize the point: "So today I introduced you to some words that help us to organize a story if we want to tell a story to someone who has not heard it before. I know my sister is going to really like this story because she loves chocolate. Lets read together our *sequencing words*." Then, all together read (and point) to each of the words: First, Then, Next, After that, and Finally.

Assessment:

- *Informal Observation*: Since this is more of an introduction lesson, heavily teacher scaffolded, the assessment comes in later on how they apply the

sequence words in the later lessons. However, a teacher is always watching level of engagement during a read aloud, the types of questions during the group discussion, and the predictions students make at the end.

Lesson 2: Practice Using Sequence Words Together (Talk)

Goal:

- Children will demonstrate their understanding of sequencing by applying the new vocabulary of the sequence words (first, then, next, after that, and finally) to structure a retelling of a story following the model from the previous lesson together.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to take the model of the lesson from yesterday and have the students work together to practice it with a different, new text from the Author study. This is to apply their new knowledge of sequence words working together and show transference from one day to the next. In addition it includes the visual of the different objects in the text, again in a specific order of events and requires students to get up and in a tactile manner, move the words/objects from the pocket chart. This text has a simpler refrain and phrase, so that by the end this retelling will be in complete sentences.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin. (2002). *Owen's Marshmallow Chick.* Greenwillow Books: NY

- Pocket chart
- *Sequence Words*: on individual sentence strips, in the same color, Sequence Words: First, Then (multiple copies), Next, After that, Finally
- Object Words: For this story, on individual sentence strips with the words and picture of the object in a different color: jelly beans, gum drops, buttercream eggs, big chocolate bunny, little marshmallow chick
- 5 copies on a sentence strip in a third color, the phrase "he ate."

Anticipatory Set:

- Teacher can begin by asking the students what they did yesterday. If necessary, teacher should ask the student what were those words we used. Each time a kid names one, the teacher can give him the card to put on the pocket chart. After all the words are up, the teacher can ask students if they are in the right order or *sequence*. If not, have another volunteer to put them in the order. Then check again until class is in agreement – there might be a discussion about then, next, etc. but "First" and "Finally" are the most important.
- Once the words are in order, the teacher can have the students retell yesterday's story using the sequence words they have just completed putting in order.

Development:

- Read Aloud: "Just like yesterday, I am going to read a new Kevin Henkes story, this one called *Owen's Marshmallow Chick*. As you listen I want you to pay close attention to the story. My sister loved Lilly's story, so I need your help to tell my sister this story. Just like yesterday, we are going to use the pocket chart to help order and sequence the story, but this time, I'm not going to do it, *you* are!"
- Read Aloud, this time emphasizing each object.
- After the story is read aloud, ask the students what the story is about. If they say a specific object, have them come up and put it in the pocket chart. The first one should be "First, he ate the jelly beans." Teacher can add the phrase "he ate." Before the next student comes up, together you can read (and add) "he ate" and have the kids continue to retell the story.

Closing:

- Checking Our Work: "Now that you have done it, good readers and learners always want to double check their work. I'm going to re-read the story to all of you. Give me a thumbs up if it is correct after each one." Teacher should then re-read the story.
- Afterwards, the teacher should ask the students *why* they did this? What does this help us do?

Assessment:

- *Informal Observation*: Teacher should be monitoring who participates and how. Do they remember the sequence words? Are they able to put them in order? Can they help each other retell the story? What are their responses to the discussion questions?

Lesson 3: Sequencing Picture Sort (Response)

Goal:

- Children will demonstrate their understanding of sequence by ordering pictures from the text in sequential order and labeling with proper sequence vocabulary, interpreting visuals associate with the reading selection.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to reinforce the understanding of sequencing by ordering illustrations from the text using their understanding of proper sequencing. This develops an understanding that pictures convey meaning. Furthermore, the illustrations in the work of Kevin Henkes not only reinforce the story but help students understand the written text and establish a connection for students between the pictures and words. The students will also get a chance to practice using the sequence words in writing. This is an independent check-in to have practice applying what they have seen modeled and practiced together. While their work from the previous day will be available as a model, by using a different text and a different format, I want to tap into a slightly different application of the same skill of sequencing.

This story, *Wemberly's Ice-Cream Star,* also gets at another reason why it is important to tell things in order. The basis of this story is about the passage of time as Wemberly's ice cream melts. A student would not comprehend the story if they thought she began with ice cream soup. Therefore this activity reinforces not only does sequencing help us tell what goes on and the words can give us structure and organization to telling the story properly, in this particular story the sequence is very important to understand the point of what happens. Again, this helps students see a connection between the illustrations and the text.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin. (2003). *Wemberly's Ice-Cream Star.* Greenwillow Books: NY
- Copies of the illustrations in the book, enough for each child to have her own set
- Scissors, glue, sequencing sheet
- Pencils
- Pocket Chart with Sequence Words as a visual reference

Anticipatory Set:

- Teacher can begin by asking the students what they did yesterday. She should ask them, what does *sequencing* mean? At this point, she could has emphasized it in the lessons, and tell them that it is a big "middle school" word. If they do not know, she can tell them that's what they have been doing, telling the stories they've been reading in order, in sequence. This

could be a way of reviewing the *sequence* words, and a way to communicate to children that illustrations are really important. Again, before the lesson can go over which words they have been practicing with.

Development:

- Introduce the activity: "Today I am going to read another, new Kevin Henkes book, similar to *Lilly's Heart* and *Owen's Marshmallow.* It is called *Wemberly's Ice-Cream Star*. As I read it, I want you to pay very close attention to the *sequence* of what's happening. After I am done reading this to you, you will get this packet of illustrations from the story and have to cut them out and put the story back together in order."
- The teacher should then read the story aloud. As she is reading, she should be emphasizing the pictures. "Hmm… what's happening here? I notice the ice cream cone is getting smaller…"
- After the story is read, the teacher should go over the directions: have students cut out the pictures and put them in order. Once the pictures are in order, on the line below the box, students have to write out the sequencing word. They may choose to write a whole sentence, but all students must write at least the word.
- As the students are completing the activity independently, teacher should be circulating, observing how it is going, who needs help, and supporting where necessary.

***Differentiation*:**

- Teacher can also offer a packet with fewer pictures to put in order. Moreover, the writing expectation is tailored to differentiating while keeping a minimal standard of everyone practicing at least the sequence word to incorporate some writing. With less pictures (3), this helps students structure between first, then, finally and connect that three to the beginning, middle, and end.

Closing:

- After everyone finishes (or is given a reasonable amount of time to do so), the whole class can gather again together. The teacher can pose the question: "How did you know which picture to glue first? Could Wemberly have started with ice-cream soup?"

Assessment:

- *Product*: The worksheet produced can be used as an assessment tool. Were the students able to sequence the pictures? Did their sequencing make sense? Did they write the *sequence words* correctly and in the right order?

Lesson 4: Tell the Story Together (Drama)

Goal:

- Children will demonstrate their understanding of sequence by acting out a familiar story (*Lilly's Chocolate Heart)* in sequence and working cooperatively.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to have students incorporate their bodies and working together while working on the text. Although students have spent time with this simple text at this point sequencing it and hearing it multiple times, the students will be able to read the words independently (with the help of their group members) and then work together to put the text, and their bodies in the right order. This story lends itself to acting out because although it is short, each preposition can be easily converted into a movement.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin. (2004). *Lilly's Chocolate Heart.* Greenwillow Books: NY.
- Pocket Chart with Sequence Words as a visual reference
- Lilly's Object Words as a visual reference
- Preposition words: on individual sentence strips in a different color, the preposition words: under, inside, on top of, behind, between, into
- Envelope (A) with cut up strips of the text.
    - Strip 1: "Lily wanted to find the perfect place to keep the heart"
    - Strip 2: "**First**, she looked under her bed, but it was too dusty"
    - Strip 3: "**Then**, she looked inside her dresser, but it was too messy"

    - Strip 4: "**Next**, she tried behind the radiator. Too warm"
    - Strip 5: **"After that**, she tried on top of the picture frame. Too narrow"
    - Strip 6: "**Then,** she tried between the books on the bookshelf. Too tight"
    - Strip 7: "**Finally,** she unwrapped the heart and popped it into her mouth"
- Envelope (B) with cut up strips of the text.
    - Strip 1: "**First**, Lilly wanted to find the perfect place for the chocolate heart."
    - Strip 2: "**Then,** she looked for a place to hide it."
    - Strip 3: "**Finally,** she ate it."
- Envelope (C) with cut up strips of the text.
    - Strip 1: "**In the beginning**, Lilly wanted to find the perfect place for the chocolate heart."
    - Strip 2: "**In the middle,** she looked for a place to hide it."
    - Strip 3: "**In the end,** she ate it."

Anticipatory Set:

- Teacher should begin by re-reading *Lilly's Chocolate Heart.* As she reads it, she should emphasize the different prepositions of where Lilly looks.
- After reading, the teacher can review the model on the pocket chart with the sequence words and objects for this story. Now she can introduce the different prepositions. She can begin by asking, "*Where* did Lilly look that

had to do with her bed?" point to the object word "bed." When a student says *under*, that student can be given the card and put it on the chart next to the object word. The teacher should ask, "Who can act out the word *under* for me?" and have a few children try it out. This should be repeated for each of the words.

Development:

- *Introduce the activity*: "Today I am going to split you into groups, and each group is going to get an envelope. Inside there is a line from the story. Each person in the group gets one line from the story. The first thing you need to do is highlight the sequence word in yellow. Next, in your group, line up in the right sequence to tell the story in the correct order. After that, you will take turns reading your strips, just like in Reader's Theater, you have to wait your turn and do your part. After you each read it once, you can try acting it."
    - In giving directions, teacher is modeling using the sequence words.
- Students split into groups and complete activity. Teacher should be circulating and observing.

***Differentiation*:**

- Teacher has different envelopes (A,B,C) to differentiate the groups. Envelopes B and C have fewer lines, less words, and less to sequence. The difference between B and C create the explicit connection between

sequencing and beginning/middle/end. Depending on the class, the teacher can use all of the envelopes or a mix.

Closing:

- Students can perform their pieces for each other.
- *Reflection*: Teacher can ask the students if this was a difficult task (what made it easy/challenging), and if they enjoyed it.

Assessment:

- *Informal observation*: Teacher should be walking around, noticing how students are working together. Are they able to read the strips and get them in the correct sequence? Are they reading their part fluently? Did they correctly highlight the sequence word?

C. Story Elements

Lesson 1: Introduce Story Elements: Answers to Questions (Model)

Lesson 2: What is a problem and solution? (Interactive)

Lesson 3: Story House (response)

Lesson 4: Which Book am I? (drama/game)

*Lesson 1**: Introduce Story Elements: Answers to Questions (model)*

Goal:

- Children will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the question words they are familiar with (who, what, where, when, why, how) and the character, setting, problem, and solution by filling out a chart whole group.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to have students make connections between their work with question words and questioning a text to help better understand their text and get them thinking. The goal is to make the explicit connection between when you are asking *who* is in the story, you are learning about the characters; the *where* and *when* teaches you about setting; *what* happens can be the problem with the *how* being the solution. The point is to use a familiar text where students can easily know the answer to these questions to be introduced to the idea of **characters**, **setting**, **problem** and **solution** for a narrative text.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin. (2004). *Lilly's Chocolate Heart.* Greenwillow Books: NY.
- 3 Columned chart and 3 different color markers

Anticipatory Set:

- Re-Read *Lilly's Chocolate Heart*. "Today we are going to be reading one of our favorites, *Lilly's Chocolate Heart.* I know that we have read it a lot, but each time we read a book, we can learn something new."

Development:

- Introduce Chart: "You are all experts at asking questions. There are some questions that help you understand a story. So for this book, I want us to answer a few questions." On the chart in the first column teacher should write "Who?" and ask the students, who is in the story? Teacher should record their answers in the second column. This should be repeated for each question word and answer.
- Once the first two columns are filled in, teacher should fill in the third column explicitly naming: "The *who* in a story is also known as the **characters**." Again this should be repeated until the entire third column is filled in.
- After it is filled in, students can repeat together the story element words together.

***Differentiation*:**

- **This lesson can be split into different lessons, one for each question word and story element. For example, one lesson can be devoted to the question, "Who is in the story?" and equating that with characters. Another entire lesson can be devoted to "Where and When do the story take place" and equating that with setting. With each those lessons, the teacher has the option of using multiple texts to pull out examples to isolate the specific element and the question it refers to.

- However, the procedure of these this lesson can be used for each question/element.
- If the lessons are split up to individual parts, there still should be a final lesson asking all the questions of the same text, in order to help set up the idea of the Story Element House: each part of the story help make up the entire story. These lessons can also relate back to the Story Element House and the differentiation part of separating it into the Rooms of the House.

Closing:

- Teacher should ask students if the students can name any other *Characters* or different *Settings* in other Kevin Henkes stories they know.

Assessment:

- *Informal Assessment:* Since this is more of an introduction lesson, heavily teacher scaffolded, the assessment comes in later on how they apply the story element words in the later lessons. However, a teacher is always watching level of engagement during a read aloud, the types of questions during the group discussion – recall of answering questions from the story, and the connections to the new vocabulary with old familiar stories that students make at the end.

Lesson 2: What is a problem and solution (interactive)

Goal:

- Children will demonstrate understanding of the problem and solution by recalling and listing problems and solutions for *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to focus in on practicing specifically with problem and solution. A familiar text is chosen so students can zoom their thinking on *what* is happening. Although the longer Kevin Henkes text may be complicated and feel like there are lots of problems, this is a way for students to examine all of the possible problems a character has – characters are complex – and yet together, can notice patterns and synthesize what the main problem is. This is a complex idea for first graders, however with familiarity of the text and characters, hopefully this will allow more cognitive work to be in place for comprehension thinking. This lesson can also be repeated and related to *Chrysanthemum* who had many problems, but they all boiled down to everyone making fun of her name, but in the end everyone wanted to also be a flower!

This lesson also serves as a later referent for connecting the different Kevin Henkes stories since it can conclude with a discussion of the problems Lilly faces not only in *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse,* but across the texts.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin (1996). *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*. Greenwillow Books: New York.

Anticipatory Set:

- The teacher should begin with a review of the previous lesson. She can begin simply by asking the students what they remember from the day before, and guide them to thinking about the explicit connection between asking questions of the text and having those questions relate specifically to **characters, setting, problem** and **solution.** The words should be made visible and listed as the students name them.
- "Today we are going to focus on, what I think, is the trickiest of the story elements, the problem and the solution: *what* is happening and *how* is it solved."

Development:

- "I am going to re-read a book for us today, *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse,* and as you listen this time, I want you to focus on what Lilly's problems and how those problems are solved."
- Teacher then reads aloud the story, doing think alouds during parts where Lilly *really* wants to show her purse, but can't and then emphasizing how in the end she is able to.
- Afterwards, the teacher should ask the students what they think Lilly's problem was and how it was solved. The teacher should record all responses and then see if together they can sum up or combine her problems into one statement about the book (Ex. Lilly wanted to share her purse but got in

trouble and angry. In the end, she made up with her teacher and got to show it).

***Differentiation*:**

- Teacher can preview a specific part of the story before hand with students who need extra support to have them focus on the problem of that specific part as they hear the story again.

Closing:

- "It seems like Lilly has lots of problems! What are some other problems that we know of that Lilly has from other Kevin Henkes stories?" This question offers children a chance to connect to others stories (which can be referred to during those explicit lessons) as well as to practice examples of problem/solution related to the model they had just participated in. Examples of Lilly's problems: finding a place for her chocolate, being new in town, getting a new baby brother.

Assessment:

- *Informal Observation*: Teacher should be monitoring who participates and how, and general engagement during read alouds. Are they able to come up with problems and how they are solved? Are they on task? Can they connect to the other stories and other problems that Lilly has?

Lesson 3: Story House (response)

Goal:

- Students will demonstrate understanding of story elements (character, setting, problem, solution) by completing a graphic organizer (Story Element House) by writing answers to questions about *Wemberly's Ice-Cream Star* about either each element (the house) or a specific element (a room in the house).

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to provide a new graphic organizer, for future use, to help students keep track of the story elements in a story. This is a visual way to help organize and structure a knowledge of a story, specifically the characters, setting, problem and solution. The visual also explicitly reinforces these elements with the corresponding questions. The house structure also emphasizes how all elements of are essential parts of the story. This can be differentiated for students who may be overwhelmed by the lay out, text, or concepts, into individual sheets about the "rooms" of the house.

Materials:

- Henkes, Kevin. (2003). *Wemberly's Ice-Cream Star.* Greenwillow Books: NY
- Reference chart of *Lilly's Chocolate Heart* made in previous lesson with three columns filled in, (questions, answers, elements).
- Blank Chart Paper with three columns and same colored markers.

- Story Element House Paper
- Story Room Paper

Anticipatory Set:

- Teacher should begin by reviewing the work the students did yesterday, with *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*. As a way to review, together, students can fill in the chart for *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse.*

Development:

- Teacher then should model taking the information from the chart and writing it in the Story Elements Sheet.
- The teacher then should introduce the activity. "Today, I am going re-read *Wemberly's Ice-Cream Star.* When I am finished, it is your job to fill out this sheet, just like I modeled with here."
- Once the story is finished, the students should return to their seats to independently fill out the Story Elements House. As students work, teacher should circulate making observations.

***Differentiation*:**

- Although the teacher should model with the Story Element House, she should also make available the simplified sheets of the rooms of the house. Each room of the house, or each element of the story, makes up the completed house.

Closing:

- Students should gather again. At this point, the teacher should ask for reflection on *why* this is important by engaging in a class discussion explicitly asking, the students *why* they think this is important? *How* is the story element house helpful? The goal is to have students understand that this is one way to help organize one's thinking while reading and give purpose to some questions a child might ask of a text and remember to be able to talk about a story with someone who has not read it before or may think differently about it. To make this concrete, teacher should mention personal connection, like previously mentioned sister ☺.

Assessment:

- *Product*: The worksheet produced can be used as an assessment tool. Were the students able to answer the questions? Did they write in complete sentences, following proper punctuation and appropriate words (word wall words, words in the classroom) spelled correctly? Most importantly: Did they correctly identify and write down the characters, setting, problem and solution or that of what they were asked/challenged to do?

Lesson 4: Which Book am I? (drama/game)

Goal:

- Students will demonstrate understanding of story elements (character, setting, problem, solution) by applying this understanding to play an interactive card game that helps them practice the importance (*the why*) of knowing the different story elements and build their confidence in their expertise of Kevin Henkes texts.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to bring together the reason behind learning the different story elements in order to be able to retell, remember, and think about a text. This is a fun and interactive way that supports the students expertise with the familiar texts and authors and allows them to play a game together.

Materials:

- Henkes' Texts Playing Card: On an Index card or cardstock (or slightly bigger) typed up should be the following information on each Henkes book. Examples:

Characters: Wemberly, Petal
Setting: Hot Day
Problem: Wemberly worried that her ice cream will get on her new dress.
Solution: She waits to eat ice cream soup.

Which story am I?
Wemberly's Ice-Cream Star

Characters: Lilly, Julius
Setting: Lilly's home
Problem: Lilly hates her baby brother Julius and gets in trouble for making fun of him
Solution: She sticks up for him when her cousin is mean to him and loves him.

Which story am I?
Julius Baby of the World

Anticipatory Set:

- Teacher should re-introduce the idea that the students are experts at the stories of Kevin Henkes. To do so, have them brainstorm a list of the Kevin Henkes books that they know and the characters in the books together. As students remember stories, teacher should hang up the cover of the books.

Development:

- "Today we are going to play a game. I will split you in groups of three or four and each group will get a special deck of cards. These cards have all the different books we have read in our Author Study of Kevin Henkes. One player gives clues from the back of the card (i.e. reads the story elements off the back: "The characters are_____; The setting is_____"). It is up to the other players to guess which book the card is referring to. If you guess the card correctly, you get to keep it. If you don't, the card goes back into the pile. Each person takes turns, and whoever has the most cards wins. What kind of information do you think is on the card that will help you guess which story it is about?" The teacher should ask this question to emphasize the important characteristics of how one would be able to retell a story and briefly assess if they are connecting the lessons and ideas.
- After a brief discussion, the teacher should show the cards and model how to play with either a co-teacher or another student. Students then break off into groups to play.

Closing:

- After playing together, students can switch partners. After sufficient time, teacher should bring all the students together to reflect and discuss, which types of information helped the students know the story the quickest? Which type questions would have made it easier or harder to play?

Assessment:

- *Informal Observations*: During the game playing, teacher should be circulating and listening in on student shares and conversations. Part of this is also about how students work together, sharing information and asking/answering questions of each other. Teacher should be listening to the students' responses and explanations of their thinking work.

Reading Strategy: Connecting

In this section, I am focusing on teaching the Comprehension Strategy of Connections. The skills and strategies needed to be able to make connections to better comprehend are (a) learning how to connect texts to one's self, and (b) learning how to connect texts to other texts. Each section is split into four different lessons, highlighting the teaching strategies of modeling, interaction/conversation (talk), writing/drawing response, and incorporating drama.

**Note*: Although the reading comprehension strategy of Connecting also includes a text-to-world connection, I believe that at this age, it is not developmentally appropriate to push connecting to the world when in first grade, the first step and important step is to really practice the text-to-self connection *and how that helps them understand the text better*. This curriculum, as an author study, lends itself concretely to text-to-text connections, where as text-to-world connections can be built upon a strong foundation of text-to-self understandings in later grades.

Some lessons include a specific section on how to differentiate for students with specific strengths and needs. However, all lessons were designed to support as many students as possible with visual (both pictorial and textual) cues and allow for teacher and group modeling, the benefits of using the frame work of an author study with multiple read-alouds and text familiarity.

The Common Core Standards and focused on in the following lessons are:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.5 Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.1.4c Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.8 With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *grade 1 topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1b Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.6 Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard

English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.6 Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using frequently occurring conjunctions to signal simple relationships (e.g., *because*).

A) Text-to-Self

Lesson 1: Framing Thinking: Sentence Structures (Model)

Lesson 2: Book Pick and Share (Talk)

Lesson 3: Scene Drawing (Response)

Lesson 4: Tableau (Drama)

Lesson 1:Framing Thinking: Sentence Structures

Goal:

- Children will make connections between personal lives and the stories they are reading by using given sentence prompts to share something personal that relates to Kevin Henkes text *Owen*:
    - This reminds me of _____ because _____.
    - This helps me understand the book because _____.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce a sentence structure to help students think about and make personal connections to a text. Connecting to a text helps students better understand that text by relating it to their previous knowledge and fitting it into their schema. Some students need to have explicit instruction and should be given a structure and model to help them organize there thinking. Therefore, the key to this idea of connecting is to emphasize the phrase: "*This helps me understand the text because…"*

Materials:

- My Teddy Bear
- Pictures of me and Snoopy
- Henkes, Kevin. (1993). *Owen*. Scholastic Inc. New York.
- Sentence strips with:
    - This reminds me of _____ because _____.
    - This helps me understand the book because _____.

Anticipatory Set:

- The teacher should ask students if they have anything that they have had since they were a baby that is very special to them or something they sleep with.
- Teacher should share something personal. For example, "I still sleep with a Teddy Bear (and the object could be brought in). When I was little, I had a Snoopy doll that I took everywhere. I was so worried about losing him, I even

had “travel Snoopies” so I would not lose the real Snoopy.” Teacher should show concrete examples (pictures, object, etc.) to help make it real and personal.

Development:

- “This story is about a little mouse who has something very special to him, just like many of you. Let’s read and as you listen, I want you to think how Owen might be feeling.” Teacher should read aloud *Owen.* As she reads, she should stop and share different things about her own personal connections with the object, using the structure of the model of the sentence strips, but without explicitly showing them yet as to not disturb the language of the story.
- After the story is over, then the teacher should introduce the sentence strips and give a few explicit examples.

Closing:

- Teacher can begin to have students try out what was modeled to them by scaffolding a mini discussion about *Julius The Baby of the World*. Teacher can begin by asking students if any of them have a younger sibling and, of those that do, how do they feel when their sibling was a baby. Right away, that is a connection they can make to the text. Then, the teacher can ask how do they think Lilly felt at first with baby Julius? How do they know? The teacher can make the explicit connection for the students (if one does not make it) that

by knowing and relating it to your own experience, you better understand what Lilly is feeling and why she might act a certain way.

- If a child brings up that they do not have a sibling, I can relate. Your personal connections are not always going to be the same as other peoples. I do not have a younger sibling, but this story helped me also understand about the stories I heard about how mean my older sister was to me when I was a baby and do not remember. The point is, everyone is different, but we can find our own connections to the stories that help us understand both the stories and characters and events in the stories better.

Assessment:

- *Informal Observation*: During the group discussion, teacher should be observing: Which students make appropriate connections from the beginning? Which ones make tangential? Are there students who are way off base? Are there students who have the idea but cannot express it appropriately?

Lesson 2: Book Pick and Share

Goal:

- Students demonstrate ability to select a book and make explicit connections, using the model sentence structures to share (a) *why* they picked the book; (b) *what* their text-to-self connection is; and (c) *how* that helps them better understand the story:

- "I picked this book because I **connect** with_____ **because**_____.
- This helps me better understand _____.

Rationale:

See Lesson 1: Framing Thinking: Sentence Structures

Materials:

- Photo-copy images of covers of Henkes book read during the course of the study
- Multiple copies of books from Henkes studies
- Sentence Strips with sentence starters:
  - "I picked this book because I **connect** with_____ **because**_____.
  - This helps me better understand _____.

Anticipatory Set:

- Teacher should re-introduce the idea that the students are experts at the stories of Kevin Henkes. To do so, have them brainstorm a list of the Kevin Henkes books that they know and the characters/basic story in the books together. As students remember stories, teacher should hang up the cover of the books.

Development:

- "Today, you and a partner are each going to pick one of the books that you are an expert at and think about what connection you have with it. For example, I chose to read to you yesterday from *Owen* because it reminded me of my own Snoopy and Teddy Bear; I knew how Owen was feeling when his parents threatened to wash him and how nervous he was to go to school without him. I had my own Travel Snoopies! If you need help talking about the book, these sentences are here to help." Teacher should then put the sentence strips out on the pocket chart and model sharing with a partner explicitly: "I picked this book because I connect with Owen's blankie because I had a very special toy when I was little. This helps me better understand how Owen feels when he might have to leave his blankie at home when he goes to school."
- Teacher should pair up the students and let them peruse the copies of the Kevin Henkes book. She should give them some time, while gently guiding them to decide and use the conversation starters.
- As the students are talking, the teacher should also record what each child did to help them for the following lesson and make informal observations.

***Differentiation*:**

- Personal sentence strips should be made available to students as a personal referent.

- While partnership should always be a specific consideration, to support language learners, a student might benefit from being in a group of 3, as opposed to a pair, to have multiple peer models using the language.

Closing:

- "Sometimes when we make a connection, we are not sure why it helps us understand a story. For example, I have a friend from graduate school and her name is Lilly, That is a personal connection I have with a character in many of Henkes' stories. My friend Lilly is nothing like Lilly though. So, by just having the same name it does not help me understand the character Lilly better. It does make me excited to read about her. It makes me think about my friend, and makes me want to keep reading. And that is great and makes the books even more special to me. But, when I am making a text-to-self connection, I really want to think how the connection helps me better understand the story or the character to make me a better reader."

Assessment:

- *Informal Observations*: During the conversations, teacher should be circulating and listening in on student shares and conversations. Part of this is also about how students work together; sharing information and asking/answering questions of each other and how/if they are using the model sentence structures. Teacher should be listening to the students' responses and explanations of their thinking work.

Lesson 3: Scene Drawing

Goal:

- Students will demonstrate their understanding of text-to-self connections by drawing the connection they made from the previous lesson on the Book Cover Sheet.

Rationale:

The purpose is to take the oral lesson from yesterday and transfer that knowledge and skill set of the personal text-to-self connection, using a different modality (visual/drawing) to represent the same concept.

Materials:

- Photo-copy images of covers of Henkes book read during the course of the study
- List of what students talked about yesterday
- Text-to-Self Connections Book Cover Sheet
- Pencils
- Sentence Strips with sentence starters:
    - "I picked this book because I **connect** with_____ **because**_____.
    - This helps me better understand _____.

Anticipatory Set:

- The teacher can begin by reviewing the previous lesson. She can share what she heard from the different discussions that she was privy to, citing specific examples and words that the students used.

Development:

- The teacher can then introduce the lesson as a way to have a way to share his or her great thinking work and connections to everyone. She should then introduce the sheet and model the procedure, via a think aloud and demonstration, continuing her example from the previous lessons of *Owen.* After making sure the directions are clear, she should send the students back to their seats for this independent work. If the students need a reminder of which connection they made the previous lesson, they can stay and meet with the teacher or choose to do a different one. The books and a little bit of time for planning should be accounted for.
- After a certain amount of time, the students will have to stop where they are (hopefully enough time allotted for majority of the students to finish), the students will share their book covers with a partner, explaining their choices. Partners will be prompted to ask, "**Why** did you choose this?" Partnerships can be made as students finish at different times as well.

***Differentiation*:**

- For some students, the sheet can be modified, enlarging the picture box and removing the writing lines. Students can orally explain their picture to a

teacher, and the teacher can write down the dictation. Alternatively, it can be set up as a cloze activity where the sentence structure is already written on the page, so the student simply fills in the title of the chosen book and the *why* behind her choice.

Closing:

- Students gather together. A volunteer (or two) can be asked for (picked ahead of time or randomly) to share their book cover, emphasizing not only their connection but also how it helped them to understand the text.
- Students should be assured that time will be given during a choice or Quiet Time to finish their sheet if so desired.

Assessment:

- *Product*: The worksheet produced can be used as an assessment tool. Were the students able to pick a scene from their book? Did their explanation make sense (i.e. did their connection help them better understand something or was it superficial)? Did they choose to add writing? If so, did they follow the models?
- The book scenes should then be displayed after used for evaluative purposes: these are something that students should be proud of and help display the sentence structures!

Lesson 4: Tableau

Goal:

- Students will demonstrate their understanding of text-to-self connections by acting out the connection they made from the previous lessons.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is for students to physically connect with their text-to-self connection that they have practiced orally and visually to get a deep understanding of the importance of text-to-self connections in many different modalities. It is important for students to be able to experience and learn skills from multiple entry points and in different ways. Students will also have to work cooperatively together to make decisions, plan, and ultimately choose a scene together. The focus of the text-to-self connection has been *how* it helps students understand characters. By focusing on character emotions, this is an easy way for students to begin to learn about empathy and get into a character's role.

Materials:

- Students' book scenes from previous lesson, grouped together by same texts/similar scene choices
- Photo-copy images of covers of Henkes book read during the course of the study as a visual reference

Anticipatory Set:

- The teacher should introduce the idea of what a "tableau" is. She should activate the students' background knowledge by going over what good actors do or by asking them how do they think actors are good at playing their roles and knowing their characters?: "It is important understand the how the characters are feeling in a scene, and one way is to put yourself in their shoes or think about a time when something similar happened to you (i.e. make a text-to-self connection!)."

Development:

- "You have already chosen a scene that you have an understanding of the characters feelings because you made a text-to-self connection with it and drawn it out on your beautiful book covers. Now you, and the group that I assign, are going to act out a scene that helps everyone else understand both what is happening in the scene and how the characters are feeling."
- Students are put into groups and given some time to practice. The goal is for them to just create a the scene that they drew, so they will have to cooperatively decide how that is going to look with their bodies, and what they are going to say, only for a minute. The teacher will tell them to freeze mid-way through, and explain, out of character, what they are thinking.

***Differentiation*:**

- If possible, teacher can show a video of a previous class' tableau as an example or model for some groups, especially on a similar scene/text.

- The texts themselves with the illustrations, while available to all groups, can be specifically used to help students looking at the illustrations or revisiting the story in general.

Closing:

- Students will get a chance to perform for each other. After each performance, the audience is allowed to ask a question, modeled for them (Why did you choose this scene? Why was he happy?), and a positive feedback (I like how you…).

Assessment:

- *Informal Observations*: During the students practice performance, the teacher is making observations. Are the students working together to pick a scene and discussing the characters? Are they able to explain why they chose the scene, what their connection is, and how it helps them be better actors? For the audience, were they able to ask questions and follow the model of positive feedback?

B) Text-to-Text

Lesson 1: Character Chart (Model)

Lesson 2: Brainstorm Connection Web (Talk)

Lesson 3: One Connection Thread (Response)

Lesson 4: Kevin Henkes "Go Fish" (Drama)

Lesson 1: Character Chart

Goal:

- Children demonstrate understanding of text-to-text connections by charting explicit connections of Characters in the different Kevin Henkes texts.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to begin to see explicit connections between texts. By starting with a character, this gives students an entry point to track a specific element that is in multiple texts. Furthermore, they have been thinking about the characters in different texts throughout the author study while learning about different skills and strategies. This lesson is to make the connection obvious, explicit, and further emphasize *how* connecting texts can help one better comprehend the different texts themselves.

Materials:

- Photo-copy images of covers of Henkes book read during the course of the study
- Chart paper, with a T-chart: One side reads "Character" the second side reads "Kevin Henkes Book"

Anticipatory Set:

- The teacher can introduce the lesson with a picture of Lilly and simply ask the students, “Who is this?” Once students identify the character, the teacher can ask the students, “where do we know her from?”

Development:

- As students begin to name the titles of books they know that Lilly is in, teacher should bring out the chart and start recording their answers in the columns. As they finish with Lilly, the teacher should go over the chart, what they have done, and say that, being Kevin Henkes experts, they know a lot and are able to make connections between the books. Lilly is a connection between this book and that book (using the students’ examples.
- After they finish with Lilly, the teacher should ask the students if they know of any other characters that connect different books, and fill out the chart accordingly.

***Differentiation*:**

- Teacher can explicitly prompt students to think about the titles of the books, where there are at least two titles with Lilly. Thinking about titles, there are multiple books with the same characters name, and that is a good place to begin looking for connections, especially with the work of Kevin Henkes.

Closing:

- "By knowing that Lilly is in all of these different texts, (a) What have we learned about Lilly? (b) What do we think she will do?" The teacher can pose these questions, but leave them up as thinking questions to help frame the point of using connections to better comprehend.

Assessment:

- *Informal Assessment*: Teacher should be aware of student responses and ability to come up with recalling the different texts, the characters, and coming up with connections amongst the texts. She should take note on how responded and level of response – literal, inferential, and evaluative. Are some students quiet during group discussions in general and does that mean they do not understand, cannot remember, or simply do not like talking in large groups? How do they respond to the thinking questions, if at all?

Lesson 2: Brainstorm Connection Web

Goal:

- Children will demonstrate their understanding of making text-to-text connections by using a graphic organizer (web) to show important ideas and relationships of ideas.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to expand upon the explicit connections between texts. This lesson allows for students to have more of a voice and see what

connections they make with less scaffolding (i.e. not limited by the lens of character). This is a great way for the teacher to be able to see what the students have picked up on, and build upon their observations and guide them into deeper thinking.

Materials:

- Photo-copy images of covers of Henkes book read during the course of the study
- Chart paper with different circles (6-9) on it, with different titles of the Kevin Henkes stories in each circle
- Different colored markers

Anticipatory Set:

- The teacher should begin the lesson by reviewing the chart from the previous lesson and commenting on the text-to-text connections the students made about the characters.
- After priming the students to think about the connections between texts, she should also remind them of the thinking questions left to ponder at the end of the previous lesson: "Yesterday we ended our lesson with some deep thinking questions about *why* we make connections between texts and *how* that helps us. In looking over this today, does anyone have any ideas about this? For example, by knowing that Victor is in *Chester's Way* and *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse,* (a) How does that help us understand Victor better? (b)

How does it help us understand the stories better? (c) How does it help us understand Kevin Henkes as an author better?" These are the same questions from the previous lesson with a different character name. These questions are guiding questions for the next few lessons so should be up and visible throughout these sets of lessons.

- The teacher should field a few responses, but mainly this is to help students begin to think metacognitively. The teacher can share that with the students. "As we do our lesson today and see connections between texts in the future, I want you to keep in mind how this helps you better understand what you are reading. Just like when you make a text-to-self connection, the important thing about the connections are that they make you better thinkers, comprehenders, and readers!"

Development:

- "Yesterday we focused on connecting the books we know about Kevin Henkes through the different characters. Today we are going to make a web together and see what other connections the stories have in common." The teacher should start off with circles of the different books. Depending on the class and their favorite texts, there should be 6-9 circles with each of the titles inside. The teacher should model how first, she can draw a line between *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* and *Julius Baby of the World* because they both have the character Lilly in it (i.e. an example from the previous lesson), but also how she can draw a line from *Julius Baby of the World* and

Chrysanthemum because in both books, the characters were mean to other characters: people teased Chrysanthemum for her name, and Lilly made fun of her brother. Connections between texts can be about characters, themes, locations…basically it is a chance to see what the students notice and also for the teacher to guide the connections.

  - *See Example Brainstorm Connections Web

Closing:

- "Wow! As you can see, there are lots of ways that these texts are connected. Also, these are only a few of the stories that you know by Kevin Henkes. If we put in different titles in the circles, what do you think would happen?"
- The teacher can also give students a preview of the next lesson: "We made a great big web together with all of these stories. Tomorrow, we are going to really zoom in and focus on one single strand of our web and think about how it helps us grow as readers."

Assessment:

- *Informal Assessment*: Teacher should be aware of student responses and ability to come up with recalling the different texts, the characters, and coming up with connections amongst the texts. She should take note on how responded and level of response – literal, inferential, and evaluative. Are some students quiet during group discussions in general and does that mean

they do not understand, cannot remember, or simply do not like talking in large groups? How do they respond to the thinking questions, if at all?

Lesson 3: One Connection Thread

Goal:

- Students will demonstrate understanding of text-to-text connections by picking one connection from the previous lesson and creating a visual representation of that connection.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is for students to focus on one text-to-text connection and draw and write about how that helps them understand (parts of) the text better. The goal was to start from a more scaffolded lens of connecting characters, then expand that to the students observations, and now to move more into the specific connection to help the students focus the attention on the importance of making connections more independently.

Also, this lesson requires using two different graphic organizers, a copy of the whole-class web made in the previous lesson, and the Text-to-Text Book Cover. Therefore, students are also learning about copying and using different note-taking sheets. Moreover, by using a very similar sheet from the text-to-self connections and a similar procedure, there is a specific intentionality to make explicit the purpose of making connections, both text-to-text and text-to-self.

Materials:

- Large copy of the class web
- Individual copy of Brainstorm Web color copied for each student
- Text-to-Text Connections Book Cover Sheet
- Pencils
- Sentence Strips with sentence starters:
    - "_____(Title)_____ connects to _____(title)_____ **because** they both _____.
    - This helps me better understand _____.

Anticipatory Set:

- The teacher should begin the lesson with a review of the previous lesson. The class web from yesterday should be displayed prominately. The teacher can ask the class what it is they made to have the students explain what they did, focusing on what are in the circles (the titles of the books) and what the lines mean (how they are *connected*).

Development:

- "Wow! You all made so many *text-to-text* connections yesterday. I can *see* all the different ways these books similar and connected. That was a lot of thinking work. Today, we are going to focus on zooming in on one connection and thinking about how it helps us learn and grow as readers."

- Teacher should then explain and model the procedure. "Each of you will get your own web, like I have here. Then, you are going to pick just one of these connections. Hmmm, I see the line between *Wemberly Worried* and *Chester's Way* says 'friendship.' This is the connection I am going to focus in on." The teacher should show and highlight this thread.
- The next step is to introduce the Text-to-Text Book Cover sheet. She can ask the students if they recognize the sheet (hopefully they do, for drawing about their personal connections), what is the same and what is different (i.e. two boxes). The teacher should then model from the connection she picked: in one box drawing Chester, Victor, and Lilly and the other draw Wemberly." After she does a quick sketch, she should use the sentence structures and say and write:
    - *Wemberly Worried* connects to *Chester's Way* **because** they both have characters who are nervous about making friends but in the end make friends.
    - This helps me better understand that lots of children are scared about school and making friends, just like me.
- After the teacher models, she can ask the students if they have any questions and go over directions one more time, and then send them off to seats.
- After a certain amount of time, the students will have to stop where they are (hopefully enough time allotted for majority of the students to finish), the students will share their book covers with a partner, explaining their choices.

Partners will be prompted to ask, "**Why** did you choose this?" Partnerships can be made as students finish at different times as well.

***Differentiation*:**

- Teacher should modify class web as needed by creating one with less titles with less connections. However, teacher should try to keep any connections that struggling student themselves contributed to the web.
- Like with the text-to-self Book Cover, the same can be modified for the text-to-text sheet: larger space for pictures and writing as either a dictation or a cloze activity.

Closing:

- Students gather together. A volunteer (or two) can be asked for (picked ahead of time or randomly) to share their book cover, emphasizing not only their connection but also how it helped the understand the text.
- Students should be assured that time will be given during a choice or Quiet Time to finish their sheet if so desired.

Assessment:

- *Product*: The worksheet produced can be used as an assessment tool. Were the students able to pick a connection from the web? Did their explanation make sense (i.e. did their connection help them better understand something or was it superficial)? Did they follow the models for writing?

Lesson 4: Kevin Henkes "Go Fish"

Goal:

- Students will demonstrate understanding of text-to-text connections by playing a game where they manipulate cards to make "pairs" of text-to-text connections.

Rationale:

The purpose of this lesson is to have a fun game where students can physically see and place texts together that make connections. Students have to think of *how* the texts connect based on their previous knowledge and the information on the cards, in order to ask for a specific connection to make a pair. This allows for students to think creatively and work together.

Materials:

- Henkes' Texts Playing Card: On an Index card or cardstock (or slightly bigger) typed up should be the following information on each Henkes book. Examples:

Characters: Wemberly, Petal
Setting: Hot Day
Problem: Wemberly worried that her ice cream will get on her new dress.
Solution: She waits to eat ice cream soup.
Which story am I?
Wemberly's Ice-Cream Star

Characters: Lilly, Julius
Setting: Lilly's home
Problem: Lilly hates her baby brother Julius and gets in trouble for making fun of him
Solution: She sticks up for him when her cousin is mean to him and loves him.
Which story am I?
Julius Baby of the World

Anticipatory Set:

- Teacher should bring out the cards. Students should be familiar with them from playing with them during the Retelling Unit. Teacher can show them and ask students which type of information is on the cards (story elements, title, cover). Teacher can ask students if they remember using them before and what they did as a way to remember and reflect.

Development:

- Teacher should then introduce the game: "Today we are going to be using the cards a little bit differently. Instead of trying to guess which book you have, you are going to play a game very similar to 'Go Fish.' Who has ever played 'Go Fish' before?" Teacher should then explain how in this game, students will each get 4 cards and take turns asking a player for a certain card. The goal of the game is to pair cards by making a text-to-text connection. Therefore, they can ask if someone has a card with the same character as they have in their book, or the same setting, or the same problem/solution. One important exception is two cards with the same title is NOT a pair. The point is to make pairs of different texts. Once they make a pair, they can put their cards down. Before they put their pair down, they have to explain to the group *what* the connection is between the cards and the group has to agree. Whoever has the most pairs wins.

- After a brief discussion, the teacher should show the cards and model how to play with either a co-teacher or another student. Students then break off into groups to play.
- After playing with the first pair, students should come together for a brief discussion. Students should get together to reflect and discuss, what kind of pairs did the students make? How did they connect the different cards by making text-to-text connections?

Closing:

- After discussing can go back to playing, if time allows, switching up partners so students can play with a variety of classmates.

Assessment:

- *Informal Observations*: During the game playing, teacher should be circulating and listening in on student shares and conversations. Part of this is also about how students work together, sharing information and asking/answering questions of each other. Teacher should be listening to the students' responses and explanations of their thinking work.

Conclusion:
Reading is Thinking - Chocolate Air

By reflecting on the research presented above and my experiences in classrooms both as a student and a teacher, and the curriculum I have created, I have come to the conclusion of the necessity of explicitly teaching reading comprehension and its importance in creating life-long passionate readers. Reading needs to be framed as thinking, with comprehension as its goal.

My primary and most valued experiences have been with first graders. That is the age where there is great developmental variation in reading and literacy skills in amongst the students. In my opinion, that is where a teacher can make the biggest difference in child's motivation and confidence and overall skill. I believe that all students, regardless of their decoding abilities, can benefit from learning explicit reading comprehension strategies, through read-alouds and group work. For struggling readers, instruction in comprehension skill work can be a leveling playing-field, and all readers at that age, or any, can work on deepening their understanding. Comprehension work can and should be differentiated based on individual understanding. A student's level of thinking can always be pushed deeper. All students can practice this cognitive work independently on their just-right texts.

To me, reading *is* thinking, and thinking is "breathing chocolate air." Ultimately, I want my students to feel the same, or at least be armed with the tools to be readers and compassionate members of society. As reading teachers we are charged with teaching students how to learn to read *and* read to learn, but more

importantly, how to learn to reflect upon that learning to make a positive impact on one's community.

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Appendix A:
Developmental Chart

Profile of 6-7 year olds	*Implications for Literacy Instruction*
Physical Picture	
• "Tooth eruption is continuous," can lead to chewing on pencils, fingernails, hair, books and other objects • Learns left from right • Falls out of chairs • "Speed is a hallmark of six" – children show great interest in being first, in doing the most work • Frequent illness, tire easily • Visually adept at tracking from L to R • Enjoy activity, outdoors, or in the gym • Heightened awareness of fingers as tools	First graders need movement. It is important to keep this in mind in developing the pacing of instruction. Movement and drama should be incorporated, and length of time doing one task should be considered.
Intellectual Picture	
• Uses logical thinking • Is thoughtful and reflective • Can tell the time • Understands that letters represent sounds, decodes sounds to learn to read • Demonstrates a longer attention span • Begins development of individual learning style • Development of sense of industry and productivity • Children begin to reason • Children work on master arithmetic skills • Children plan coordinated actions • Children are generally optimistic about their school performance • Children begin to think abstractly and are able to hypothesize • Children are introduced to higher order thinking • Children are introduced to a wide variety of subject matter in school	Although movement is important, six and seven year olds are able to sit and concentrate for longer periods of time then they were previously. They are able to sit and listen to longer read aloud. Since they are more reflective, this it is a time when metacognition and monitoring skills can be introduced, along with the higher order thinking lessons of reading comprehension. With the development of individual learning styles, it is important to provide academic choice and multi-modal instruction, and be prepared for differentiating lessons

Symbolic Functions	
• Children now understand that something can be both the object itself as well as a symbol for something. For example, they understand that a stuffed dog is a fun, furry object as well as a representation of a real dog • Children are able to understand, represent, and picture objects in their minds without having the object in hand	It is developmentally appropriate at this age to use visuals, along with concrete objects, for representation. Lessons can include an option for students to draw, college, and use artistic representation to represent their thoughts and thinking.
Self-Social	
• According to Erikson, at 7 years old children begin to develop a "sense of industry" and learn to cooperate with their peers and adults • Being integrated into a school's culture sets a mindset that children can determine their status socially by competence and performance • Children want to undertake adult activities and responsibilities • Children become more able to reflect on themselves, their actions, and their goals • Problem solving becomes more innate, they are able to adjust their plans of action based on outcome and strategize to find a better method to reach goals • They become more aware of themselves in relation to others, and are more able to see another's point of view and understand their differences • Children begin interacting with peers without parental supervision and are expected to be able to handle these types of interactions they become more responsible for nurturing or comforting each other, taking leadership positions and developing social hierarchies and dynamics • Kids begin to compromise and start	This is an important time for this age to develop cooperative learning skills since they are become more self aware, interacting with peers, and are more competitive. It is important for first graders to be explicitly taught how to talk and listen and to be given the opportunity to practice both. Collaborative work needs to be considered in planning, especially for opportunities to talk whole group, small group, and pairs. Sharing is also key. This is a prime age to begin to teach students the importance of cooperation as opposed to competition, where success is NOT a zero-sum game. Moreover, an author study where there is a de-emphasis on one's reading level is a consideration. Students need to be guided and scaffolded with the ultimate goal of a gradual release of responsibility of their learning.

learning to balance their needs with the needs of others • Sets of rules change when children enter elementary school, 6-7 year olds are expected to show a higher degree of self control in order to accomplish their goals in school and to be considered a "good" student by the adults in that environment • The desire to please and ingratiate themselves becomes much more apparent as their successes and failures become more obvious by comparison to others • They experience frustration easily, especially when they feel they are inferior to their peers • They tend to have optimistic attitudes and skewed views of their abilities, will often rank themselves at the top of their class in many realms even if they really do not rank there • Must be a winner, may adjust the rules of the game in their favor so they can avoid loss or the feeling of being unsuccessful. Taking turns can be difficult	
Skill Learning	
• Discovery learner, asks a lot of questions • Motivated to learn, enjoys process • Interested in technology • Likes to do "work": reading and writing tasks • Likes to produce quantity, not necessarily quality • Enjoy games, poems, songs • Develop key thinking or conceptual thinking • Develop skills of reading and writing, think about and discover strategies of	It is important to nurture a first graders natural tendency towards curiosity, asking question, and enjoying learning and "working." As they develop conceptual thinking, it is important to include a focus on cognitive and comprehension work. Students need to be explicitly taught to slow down and focus on the "process" as opposed to the quantity of their work; therefore being reflective and metacognitive are important

learning • Begin to learn to plan, evaluate, and reflect (start to become metacognitive) • According to Piaget, transitional period between pre-operational and concrete operation: different levels of understanding of an "abstract concept of quantity" in different modalities (cookie vs. number vs. coin)	tools to develop. Moreover, during this "transitional period" it is again important to consider multimodal teaching and differentiation.
Ethical and Moral Development	
• Competitive • Wants to be first, can be "poor sports" • Erikson's "Initiative vs. Guilt Stage": motivated to be like adults and overstep parental limits but then feel bad about it	Although this is a reiteration of what is previously stated, it is crucial at this age to stress the importance of cooperation versus competition and to help the development of empathy. Moreover, it is important at this age for students to be a part of the creation of the rule-making process and receive a concrete explanation of *why* certain behaviors are acceptable or not.

Name:_____

Date:_____

Appendix B:
Purse Worksheet

Who?

What?

Where?

When?

Why?

How?

Appendix C:
Letter Writing Paper

_____

_____,

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____,

_____

Appendix D:
About the Author Sheet

About the Author

Appendix E:

Sequencing Sheet

Sequencing *Wemberly's Ice-Cream Star*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Appendix F:
Story Elements House

Name:_____

Story Elements

Title:_____

Characters: *Who* is in your story?

Setting: *Where* is the story

Problem: *What* went wrong?

Solution: *How* was it solved?

Appendix G:
Story Room Paper

Name:_____

Date:_____

Story Room:
Characters

Title:_____

***Characters**: Who is in your story?*

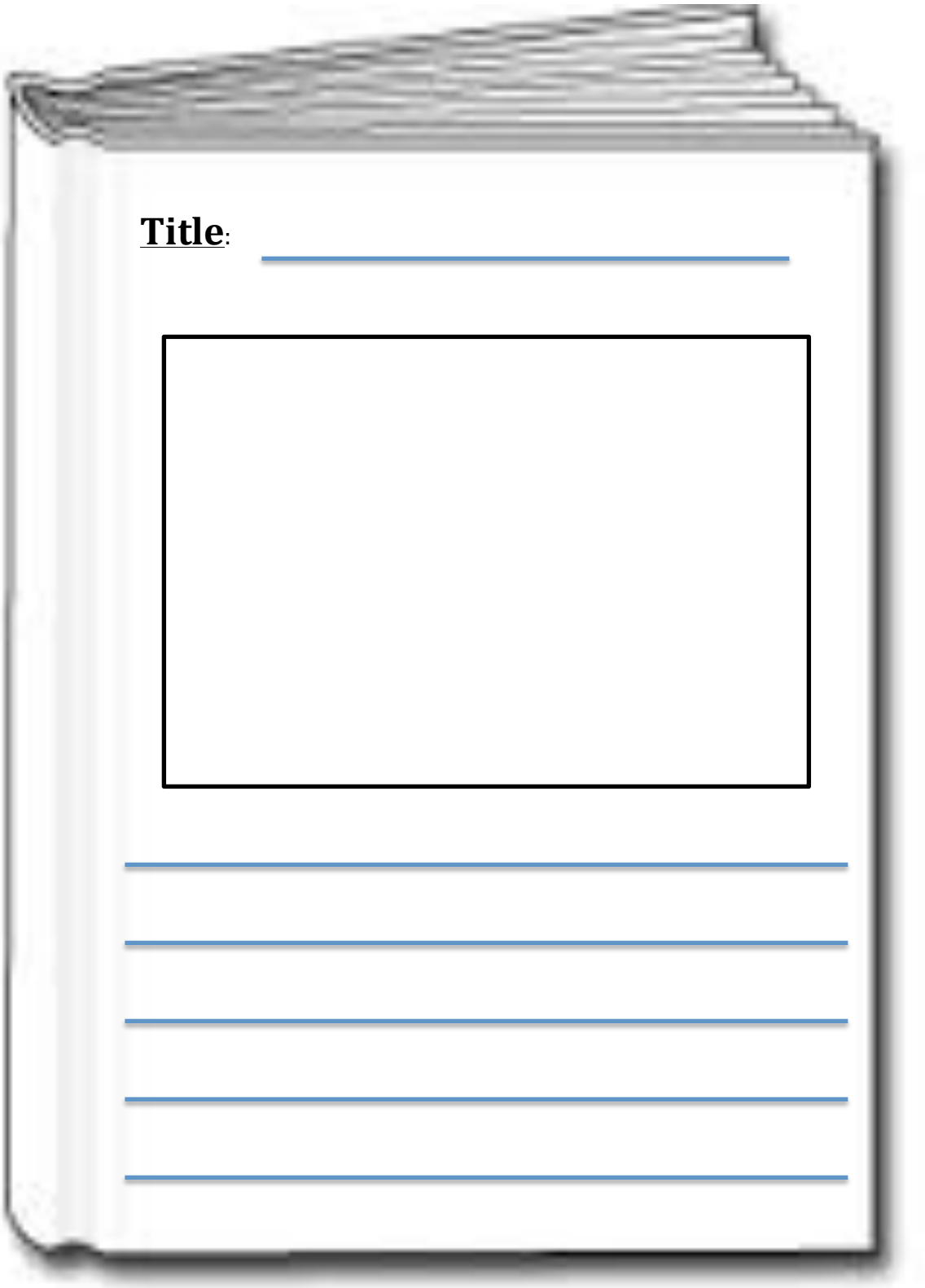
Name:_____

Date:_____

Appendix H:

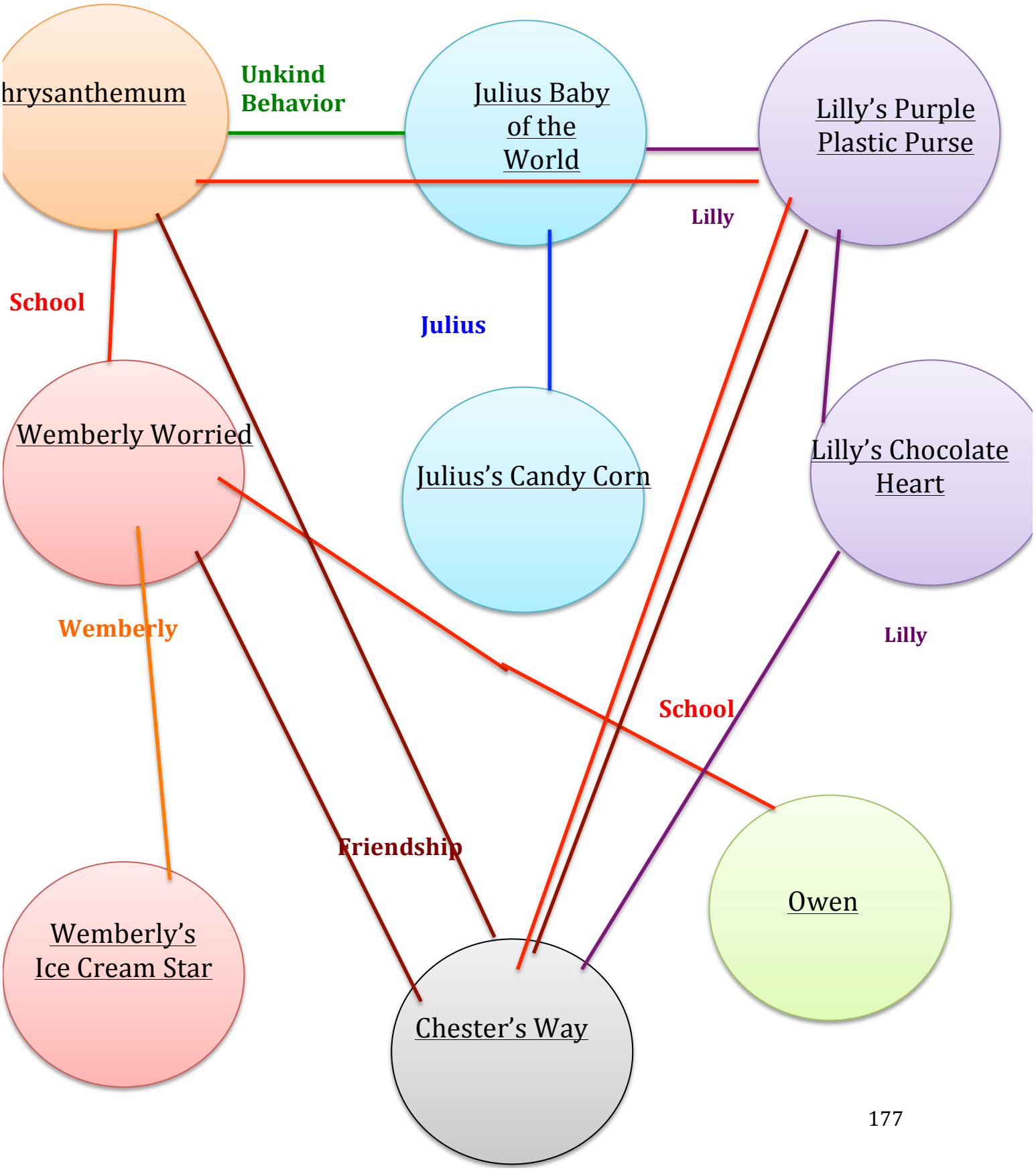
Text-to-Self Connections Book Sheet

Text-to-**Self** Connections



Title:

Appendix I:
Brainstorm Web



Appendix J:

Text-to-Text Connections Book Sheet

Text-to-**Text** Connections